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MARIA DE', SAINT

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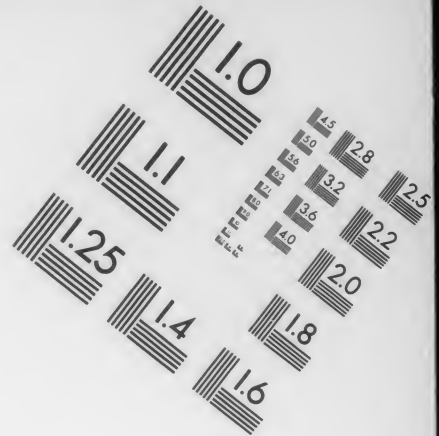
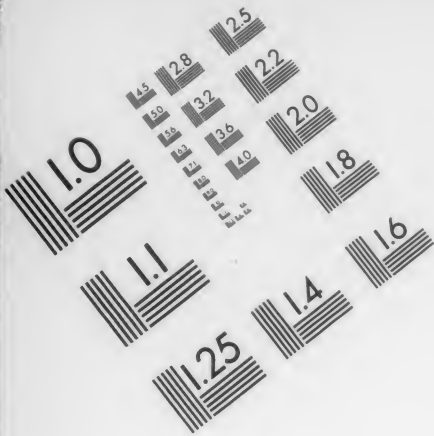


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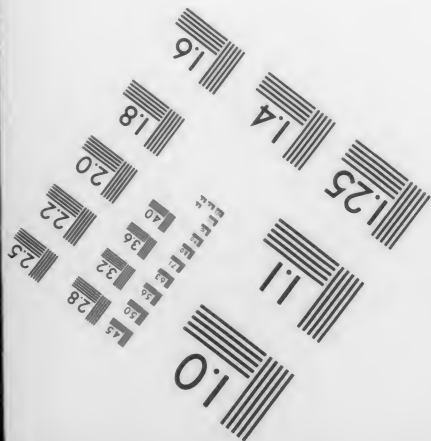
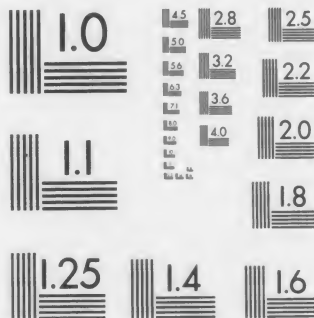
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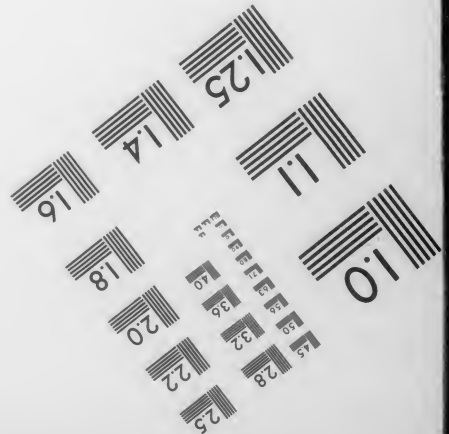
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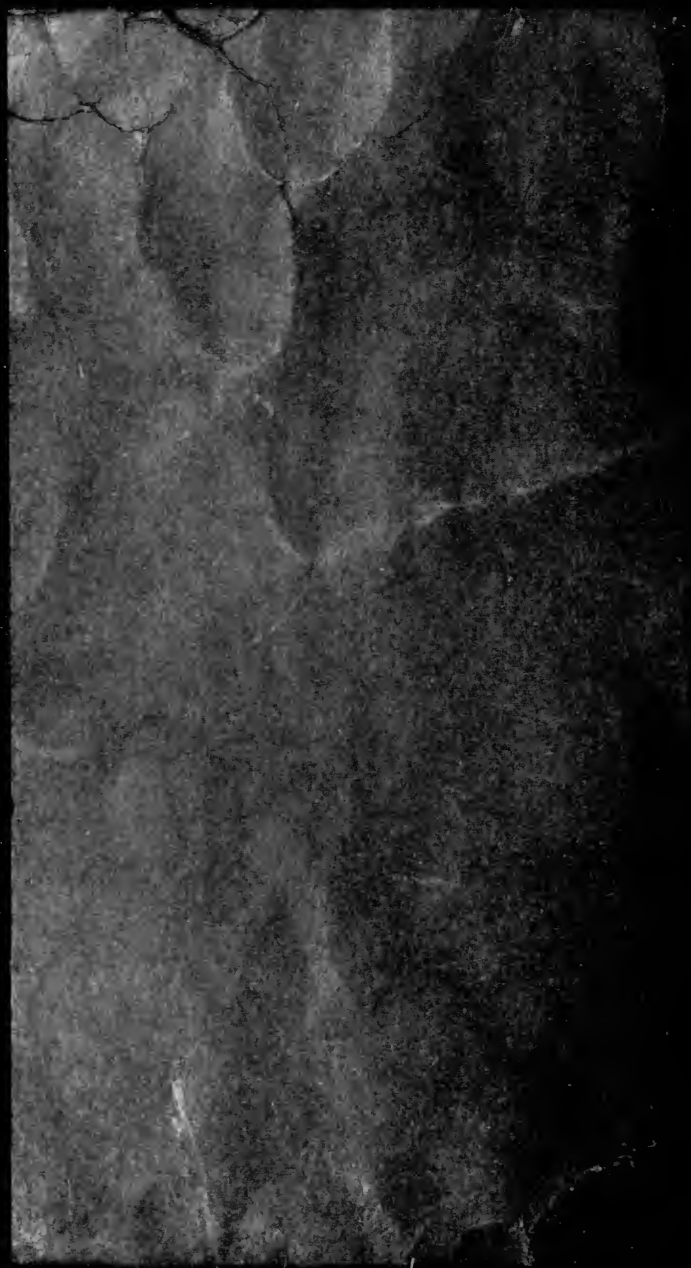


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THE
MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH.

The Holy Eucharist.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street and Fetter Lane.

THE
MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH.

The Holy Eucharist.

CONTAINING:

PART I.

THE VISITS AND OTHER DEVOTIONS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT,
PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY COMMUNION, ETC.

PART II.

NOVENA OF THE HOLY GHOST, SHORT SPIRITUAL TREATISES ON THE LOVE
OF GOD, UNIFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD, REST FOR
SCRUPULOUS SOULS, ETC.

BY

ST. ALPHONSUS, MARIA DE LIGUORI, S. J.
BISHOP OF ST. AGATHA, AND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY
REDEEMER.

Now translated from the Italian,

AND EDITED BY

ROBERT A. COFFIN,
PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.



LONDON:

BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
AND 63 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1855.

RESCRIPT OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS IX.

(TRANSLATION.)

" MOST HOLY FATHER,

" The Bishop of Southwark in England, in representing to your Holiness how the Redemptorist Fathers have had the consolation to see an immense good result from the condescension with which your Holiness was pleased to praise the *German* edition of the works of St. Alphonsus, humbly begs to be authorised to bless, in the name of your Holiness, the translation already commenced, and in part published, of the pious works of St. Alphonsus in *English*.

" In an audience with his Holiness on the 13th of November, 1853, our most holy Lord, by Divine Providence, Pope Pius IX., at the request of me, the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was graciously pleased to grant the above petition; charging, however, the conscience of the petitioner with faithfulness in the translation.

" Given at Rome, from the Palace of the Sacred Congregation, on the day and in the year as above.

" Gratis, &c. &c.

AL. BARNARD, Secretary."

Imprimatur.

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

April 23, 1855.

TO
THE CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN
OF
ENGLAND AND IRELAND,

This Volume,

FOR THE LOVE OF

JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT,

THE SAFEGUARD OF THEIR FAITH AND PURITY,

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

96742

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19 S 89 Mrs A. M. Morrison

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE various treatises which compose the present volume are too well known to need any introductory remarks. The translation and arrangement of them alone are new. It is hoped that the reader will not find it unacceptable to have collected in one volume all that St. Alphonsus has written on the Holy Eucharist, together with his smaller spiritual treatises, which are amongst the most engaging of his works.

The Visits to the Blessed Sacrament speak for themselves; they have but to be used, to prove the truth of what their saintly author has said with regard to that most Catholic devotion; for the promotion of which he has been, in the hands of God, one of the most powerful instruments.

The little works which form the second part of the volume have been hitherto known under the title of the *Spirit of St. Liguori*: and perhaps they could not have been more correctly described; breathing, as they do throughout, that peculiar unction and practical piety, united to the greatest simplicity, which have always given to the works of St. Alphonsus an attraction especially their own.

It is a matter of regret to the Editor, that circumstances, over which he had no control, prevented him from publishing, as he had desired, the volume on the Passion in time for the Lent of this year; it is, however, in progress, and will, he hopes, appear in good time for the next Lent.

ROBERT ASTON COFFIN, C.SS.R.

Bishop Eton, near Liverpool,
April 7, 1855.

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PART I.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

TO MARY,

THE EVER-IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD.

My most holy Queen,—On the point of publishing the present little work, in which I treat of the love of thy Son, I know not to whom I can better dedicate it than to thee, my most beloved Mother, who, amongst all creatures, art His most tender lover. I believe that by this little offering which I present to thee, and which is composed for the sole purpose of inflaming souls more and more with the love of Jesus Christ,—I believe, I say, that by it I shall greatly please thee, who desirest to see Him loved by all as He deserves. To thee, then, I consecrate it, such as it is; do thou graciously accept and protect it; not indeed that I may receive the praises of men, but that all who read it may for the future correspond, by their greater devotion and affection, with the tender and excessive love which our most sweet Saviour has been pleased to show us in His Passion, and in the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament. As such, I place it at thy feet, and beseech thee to accept the gift as wholly thine, as also the giver, who has long since placed all his hopes in thee, and wishes and hopes always to call himself, and to rejoice in being,

Most gracious Lady,

Thy most loving, though most unworthy servant,

ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

TO THE READER.

I BEG, my dear reader, that you will not despise this little book, though written with the utmost simplicity. I have composed it in such simple style, because I believe that it will thus be more calculated to promote devotion amongst all classes of persons. I also beg, that whether I am living or dead, you will recommend me to the Most Holy Sacrament each time that you use it; and on my part I promise to pray for all who do me this act of charity, every time I offer up the Most Holy Sacrifice.

VISITS

TO THE

MOST HOLY SACRAMENT AND TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

OUR holy faith teaches us, and we are bound to believe, that in the consecrated Host, Jesus Christ is really present under the species of bread. But we must also understand, that He is thus present on our altars as on a throne of love and mercy, to dispense graces, and there to show us the love which He bears us, by being pleased to dwell night and day hidden in the midst of us. It is well known that the Holy Church instituted the Festival of Corpus Christi with a solemn octave, and that she celebrates it with the many usual processions, and such frequent expositions of this Most Holy Sacrament, that men may thereby be moved gratefully to acknowledge and honour this loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, by their devotions, thanksgivings, and the tender affections of their souls. O God! how many insults and outrages has not this amiable Redeemer had, and has He not daily, to endure in this Sacrament on the part of those very men for whose love He remains upon their altars on earth! Of this He indeed complained to His dear servant Sister Margaret Alacoque, as the author of the *Book of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus* relates. One day, as she was in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus showed her His Heart on a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross, and thus addressed her: "Behold that Heart, which has loved men so much, and which has spared Itself nothing; and has even gone so far as to consume Itself, thereby to show them Its love; but in return the greater part of men only show Me ingratitude, and this by the irreverences, tepidity, sacrileges,

and contempt which they offer Me in this Sacrament of Love; and that which I feel the most acutely is, that they are hearts consecrated to Me." Jesus then expressed His wish, that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi should be dedicated as a particular festival in honour of His adorable Heart; and that on that day all souls who loved Him should endeavour, by their homage, and by the affections of their souls, to make amends for the insults which men have offered Him in this Sacrament of the Altar; and at the same time He promised abundant graces to all who should thus honour Him.

We can thus understand what our Lord said of old by His prophet, that His delight is to be with the children of men; since He is unable to tear Himself from them even when they abandon and despise Him. This also shows us how agreeable all those souls are to the Heart of Jesus who frequently visit Him, and remain in His company in the churches in which He is, under the sacramental species. He desired St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to visit Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day; and this beloved Spouse of His faithfully obeyed Him, and in all her visits to the altar approached it as near as she possibly could, as we read in her life. But let all those devout souls who often go and spend their time with the Most Blessed Sacrament speak;—let them tell us the gifts, the inspirations which they have received, the flames of love which are there enkindled in their souls, the paradise which they enjoy in the presence of this hidden God. The servant of God and great Sicilian missionary-father, Louis La Nusa, was, even in his youth and as a layman, so enamoured of Jesus Christ, that he seemed unable to tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord; and such were the joys which he there experienced, that his director, having commanded him, in virtue of obedience, not to remain there for more than an hour; when that time had elapsed, he showed in obeying (says the author of his life), that in tearing himself from the bosom of Jesus Christ, he had to do himself just such violence as a child which has to detach itself from its mother's breast in the very moment in which it is satiating itself with the utmost

avidity; and when he had to do this, we are told that he remained standing with his eyes cast on the altar, making repeated inclinations, as if he knew not how to quit his Lord, whose presence was so sweet and gracious to him. St. Aloysius was also forbidden to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament; and as he used to pass before it, finding himself drawn, so to say, by the sweet attractions of his Lord, and almost forced to remain there, he would, with the greatest effort, tear himself away, saying, with an excess of tender love: *Depart from me, O Lord, depart!* There it was also that St. Francis Xavier found refreshment in the midst of his many labours in India; for he employed his days in toiling for souls, and his nights in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. St. John Francis Regis did the same thing; and sometimes finding the church closed, he endeavoured to satisfy his longings by remaining on his knees outside the door, exposed to the rain and cold, that at least at a distance he might attend upon his Comforter concealed under the sacramental species. St. Francis of Assisi used to go and communicate all his labours and undertakings to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. But tender indeed was the devotion of St. Wenceslaus, duke of Bohemia, to the Most Holy Sacrament. This holy king was so enamoured of Jesus there present, that he not only gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine with his own hands, and then gave them to be used in the Holy Sacrifice, but moreover, he used, even during the winter, to go at night to visit the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept; and these visits enkindled in his beautiful soul such flames of Divine love, that their ardour imparted itself even to his body, and took from the snow on which he walked its wonted cold; for it is related, that the servant who accompanied him in these nightly excursions, having to walk through the snow, suffered much from the cold. The holy king, on perceiving it, was moved to compassion, and commanded him to follow him, and only to step in his footmarks: he did so, and never afterwards felt the cold.

In the visits you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God

loved to dwell in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. But you will find that all the Saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion; since, indeed, it is impossible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Certainly amongst all devotions, after that of receiving the Sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. Be not then loth, devout soul, now to begin; and forsaking the conversation of men, dwell each day, from this time forward, for at least half or quarter of an hour, in some church, in the presence of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species. "Taste and see how sweet is the Lord." Only try this devotion, and by experience you will see the great benefit that you will derive from it. Be assured that the time you will thus spend with devotion before this Most Divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and in eternity. You must also be aware, that in a quarter of an hour's prayer spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true, that in every place God graciously hears the petitions of those who pray to Him, having promised to do so: "Ask, and you shall receive;" yet the disciple tells us that Jesus dispenses His graces in greater abundance to those who visit Him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used also to say, that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the Sacrament of the Altar than elsewhere. And where, indeed, did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions, but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of a tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? In this little book I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, to declare, that through the means of this devotion of visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, for my misfortune, I lived until I was six-and-

twenty years of age. Fortunate indeed will you be if you can detach yourself from it at an earlier period, and give yourself without reserve to that Lord who has given Himself without reserve to you. I repeat it, that indeed you will be blessed, not only in eternity, but even in this life. Believe me, all is folly: feasts, theatres, parties, excursions,—these are the pleasures of the world, but pleasures which are filled with the bitterness of gall and with sharp thorns. Believe me, who have experienced it, and now weep over it. Be also assured that Jesus Christ finds means to console a soul which remains with a recollected spirit before the Most Blessed Sacrament, far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pastimes. Oh, how sweet a joy it is, to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, who is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who pray to Him; to ask His pardon for the displeasures which we have caused Him; to represent our wants to Him, as a friend does to a friend in whom he places all his confidence; to ask Him for His graces, for His love, and for His kingdom; but above all, oh, what a heaven is it there to remain making acts of love towards that Lord who is on the very altar praying to the Eternal Father for us, and is there burning with love for us; since indeed that love it is which detains Him there, thus hidden and unknown, and when He is even despised by ungrateful souls! But why should we say more? "Taste and see."

And now as to the visits to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known, and generally believed: it is, that God dispenses no graces otherwise than through the hands of Mary: 'God wills that we should receive nothing which does not pass through Mary's hands.' Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that 'the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces.' And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of the Sacred Scripture to Mary, and making her say: "In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me,

all ye that desire me" (Ecclus. xxiv. 25). Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire. Hence she then adds: "Blessed is the man that neareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors" (Prov. viii. 34). Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession; for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation: "He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord" (ibid. 35). Hence it is not without reason that the Holy Church wills that we should all call her our common hope, by saluting her saying, 'Hail, our hope!'

'Let us then,' says St. Bernard (who went so far as to call Mary 'the whole ground of his hope'), 'seek for graces, and seek them through Mary.' Otherwise, says St. Antoninus, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be making an effort to fly without wings, and we shall obtain nothing: 'He who asks without her as his guide, attempts to fly without wings.'

In Father Auriemma's little book, *Affetti Scambievoli*, we read of innumerable favours granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before some image: we read of the graces which she granted in these visits to blessed Albert the Great, to the Abbot Rupert, to Father Suarez, especially when she obtained them the gift of understanding, by which they afterwards became so renowned throughout the Church for their great learning: the graces which she granted to the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who was in the daily habit of visiting Mary in a chapel of the Roman college, and declared that he renounced all earthly love to love no other after God than the Most Blessed Virgin, and had written at the foot of the image of his beloved Lady: 'I will never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love for my Mother: the graces which she granted to St. Bernardine of Sienna, who in his youth also went every day to visit her in a chapel near the city-gate, and declared that that Lady had ravished his heart; hence he called her his beloved, and said that he could not do less than often visit her; and by her means he

afterwards obtained the grace to renounce the world, and to become what he afterwards was, a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Do you, then, be also careful always to join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. If you do this with tender affection and confidence, you may hope to receive great things from this most gracious Lady, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.

Mary, Queen of sweetest hope,
Who can e'er forget thee?
By thy mercy, by thy love,
Have pity, Queen, on me!

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

As in all the following visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament a spiritual communion is recommended, it will be well to explain what it is, and the great advantages which result from its practice. A spiritual communion, according to St. Thomas, consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him. How pleasing these spiritual communions are to God, and the many graces which He bestows through their means, was manifested by our Lord Himself to Sister Paula Maresca, the foundress of the convent of St. Catherine of Sienna in Naples, when (as it is related in her life) He showed her two precious vessels, the one of gold, the other of silver; He then told her that in the gold vessel He preserved her sacramental communions, and in the silver one her spiritual communions. He also told Blessed Jane of the Cross that each time that she communicated spiritually she received a grace of the same kind as the one which she received when she really communicated. Above all, it will suffice us to know that the holy Council of Trent greatly praises spiritual communions, and encourages the faithful to their practice.

Hence all devout souls are accustomed often to practise this holy exercise of spiritual communion. Blessed Agatha of the Cross did so two hundred times a day. And Father Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was of the highest utility to make spiritual communions, in order to receive the sacramental communion well.

All those who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ are exhorted to make a spiritual communion at least once in every visit that they pay to the Most Blessed

ON SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

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Sacrament, and at every Mass that they hear; and it would even be better on these occasions to repeat the communions three times, that is to say, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This devotion is far more profitable than some suppose, and at the same time nothing can be easier in practice. The above-named Blessed Jane of the Cross used to say, that a spiritual communion can be made without any one remarking it, without being fasting, without the permission of our director, and that we can make it at any time we please: an act of love does all.

ACT FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

A SHORTER ACT.

I believe that Thou, O Jesus, art in the Most Holy Sacrament! I love Thee and desire Thee! Come into my heart. I embrace Thee; oh, never leave me!

'May the burning and most sweet power of Thy love, O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech Thee, absorb my mind, that I may die through love of Thy love, who wast graciously pleased to die through love of my love.'—*St. Francis of Assisi.*

'O Love who art not loved! O Love who art not known!'—*St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi.*

'O my Spouse, when wilt Thou ravish me in Thyself?'—*St. Peter of Alcantara.*

Jesus, my good, my sweetest love,
Strike and inflame this heart of mine,
Make it all fire for love of Thee!

Hail to the love of Jesus, our Life, and our All! Hail to Mary, our hope! Amen.

ACTS TO BE MADE BEFORE EACH VISIT TO THE MOST
BLESSED SACRAMENT.

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the love which Thou bearest to men, remainest night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit Thee; I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar; I adore Thee from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and in particular for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament, for having given me Thy most holy Mother Mary for my advocate, and for having called me to visit Thee in this church. I now salute Thy most loving Heart; and this for three ends: 1. in thanksgiving for this great gift; 2. to make amends to Thee for all the outrages which Thou receivest in this Sacrament from all Thine enemies; 3. I intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places on earth in which Thou art present in this Sacrament, and in which Thou art the least revered and the most abandoned. My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Thy infinite goodness. I purpose by Thy grace never more to offend Thee for the time to come; and now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve; I give Thee and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From henceforward do Thou dispose of me and of all that I have as Thou pleasest. All that I ask of Thee and desire is Thy holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Thy will. I recommend to Thee the souls in purgatory; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners. In fine, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Thy most loving Heart; and I offer them, thus united, to Thy Eternal Father, and beseech Him in Thy Name to vouchsafe, for Thy love, to accept and grant them.

VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT,

ETC.

FIRST VISIT.

BEHOLD the source of every good, Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, who says, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me" (St. John vii. 37). Oh, what torrents of grace have the Saints drawn from the fountain of the Most Blessed Sacrament! for there Jesus dispenses all the merits of His Passion, as it was foretold by the Prophet: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains" (Is. xii. 3). The Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the Venerable Father John d'Avila, afterwards a poor Clare, and surnamed the spouse of the Most Blessed Sacrament from her long and frequent visits to it, on being asked how she employed the many hours thus passed in the presence of the Holy of holies, replied: "I could remain there for all eternity. And is not the very essence of God, which will be the food of the blessed, there present? Good God! am I asked what I do in His presence? Rather, what is not done there? We love, we ask, we praise, we give thanks. We ask, what does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a limpid fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a well-charged table?"

O my most amiable, most sweet, most beloved Jesus, my Life, my Hope, my Treasure, the only Love of my soul; oh, what has it cost Thee to remain thus in the midst of us in this Sacrament! Thou hadst to die, that Thou mightest

thus dwell amongst us on our altars ; and then, how many insults hast Thou not had to endure in this Sacrament, in order to aid us by Thy presence ! Thy love, and the desire which Thou hast to be loved by us, have conquered all.

Come then, O Lord, come and centre Thyself within my heart ; close its doors for ever, that henceforward no creature may enter there, to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me ; do Thou alone in full possess me ; and if betimes I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigour, that thenceforward I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou wilt. Grant that I may no longer seek for any other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure ; that all my pleasure may be to visit Thee often on Thine altars ; to entertain myself with Thee, and to receive Thee in the Holy Communion. Let all who will, seek other treasures ; the only treasure which I love, the only one which I desire, is that of Thy love ; for this alone will I ask at the foot of the altar. Do Thou make me forget myself, that thus I may alone remember Thy goodness. Blessed Seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love which you bear to your and my God ; oh, do you teach me what I must do to love Him, and to give Him the greatest pleasure.

Ejaculatory prayer. My Jesus, I will love Thee alone ; I will please Thee alone.

Then follows the Spiritual Communion, after which the visit should be paid to the ever-blessed Mary, the Mother of God, before some image of her.

VISIT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

In our Mother Mary we have another fountain, which is indeed fruitful to us. She is so rich in good things and in graces, says St. Bernard, that there is no one in the world who does not participate in them : 'Of her fulness we have all received.' The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was filled by God with grace, and as such was saluted by the angel : "Hail, full of grace ;" not for herself alone, but also for us. St. Peter Chrysologus adds, that she received

that great abyss of grace, that she might then impart it to all who are devout to her : 'The Blessed Virgin received this grace, that she might give in return salvation to all.'

Ejaculatory Prayer. Cause of our joy, pray for us !

Then is said the following Prayer to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, which should be recited every day after each visit to her, thereby to obtain her most powerful patronage.

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord, the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day,—I, who am the most miserable of all. I worship thee, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces which thou hast hitherto granted me ; and especially I thank thee for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, most amiable Lady ; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise always to serve thee, and to do all that I can that thou mayest also be loved by others. I place all my hopes in thee, and I confide my salvation to thy care ; accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, do thou deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain me strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask the true love of Jesus Christ ; through thee I hope to die a good death. My Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me always, but especially at the last moment of my life ; leave me not until thou seest me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen.

SECOND VISIT.

The devout Father Nieremberg says, that bread being a food which is consumed by eating, and which keeps when preserved for use, Jesus was pleased to dwell on earth under its species, that He might thus not only be consumed by uniting Himself to the souls of His lovers by the means of the Holy Communion, but also that He might be

preserved in the tabernacle, and be present with us, and thus remind us of the love which He bears us. St. Paul says: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). But what must we say when we see Him 'taking the form of bread?' 'No tongue would suffice,' says St. Peter of Alcantara, 'to proclaim the greatness of the love which Jesus bears to every soul which is in a state of grace; and therefore, in order that His absence might not be to them an occasion of forgetting Him, this most sweet Spouse, when He was pleased to quit this life, left as a memorial this Most Blessed Sacrament, in which He Himself remained; He willed not that between these souls and Himself any other pledge but Himself should remain, whereby to keep alive their remembrance of Him.'

Since, then, my Jesus, Thou art enclosed in this tabernacle to receive the supplications of miserable creatures who come to seek an audience of Thee, listen this day to the petition addressed to Thee by the most ungrateful sinner living on earth.

I come repentant to Thy feet; for I now know the evil which I have committed in giving Thee displeasure. My first prayer and desire, then, is, that Thou wilt be pleased to pardon me all the sins which I have committed against Thee. Ah, my God, would that I had never offended Thee! After this I must tell Thee my next desire. Now that I have found out Thy sovereign goodness, I have become enamoured of Thee; I feel an ardent desire to love Thee and to please Thee; but I have not the strength to do this unless Thou helpst me. Manifest, O great Lord, Thy supreme power, and Thy immense goodness to the whole court of heaven; change me from a great rebel, such as I have hitherto been to Thee, into a great lover of Thee. Thou canst do it, and I know that such is Thy will; supply all that is wanting in me, that thus I may be enabled to love Thee much,—at least that I may love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than my life, my God, my Love, my All!

Ejac. My God and my All!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." *Heb.* iv. 16.

St. Antoninus says, that Mary is this throne, from which God dispenses all graces. O most amiable Queen, since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee; help me much, and help me without delay!

Ejac. Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me.
S. Aug.

Then follows the usual prayer.

THIRD VISIT.

"And My delights were to be with the children of men." *Prov.* viii. 31.

Behold our Jesus, who, not satisfied with dying on earth for our love, is pleased even after His death to dwell with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, declaring that He finds His delights among men. 'O men,' exclaims St. Teresa, 'how can you offend a God who declares that it is with you that He finds His delights!' Jesus finds His delights with us; and shall we not find ours with Jesus? And we especially who have had the honour to dwell in His palace? How greatly do those vassals esteem themselves honoured to whom the king assigns an abode in his own residence! Behold the palace of the King; it is this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us, then, learn to thank Him for it, and to avail ourselves of conversing with Jesus Christ.

Behold me, then, O my Lord and God, before this altar, on which Thou residest night and day for my sake. Thou art the Source of every good; Thou art the Healer of every ill; Thou art the Treasure of every poor creature. Behold now at Thy feet a sinner, who is of all others the poorest and most infirm, and who asks Thy mercy; have pity upon me! Now that I see Thee in this Sacrament, come down from heaven upon earth only to do me good, I will not be

disheartened at the sight of my misery. I praise Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee; and if Thou wilt that I should ask Thee for an alms, I will ask for this; O listen to me: I desire never more to offend Thee; and I desire that Thou shouldest give me light and grace to love Thee with all my strength. Lord, I love Thee with my whole soul; I love Thee with all my affections. Do thou grant that I may thus speak with truth; and that I may speak in the same way during life and for all eternity. Most holy Virgin Mary, my holy patron saints, ye angels, and all ye blessed spirits of paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

Ejac. O Good Shepherd, true Bread, Jesus, have mercy on us: do Thou feed us; do Thou guard us; do Thou show us good things in the land of the living!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"Her bands are a healthful binding." *Eccles.* vi. 31.

The devout Pelbart says, that devotion to Mary is a chain of predestination. Let us beseech our sovereign Lady to bind us always more closely by the chains of love to confidence in her protection.

Ejac. O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!

The usual prayer.

FOURTH VISIT.

["Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness." *Wisd.* viii. 16.

do Friends on earth find such pleasure in being together, that they lose entire days in each other's company: with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, those who love Him not get weary.] After her death, St. Teresa, who was already in heaven, said to a nun: 'Those who are in heaven and those who are on earth should be one and the same in purity and in love; we enjoying, and you suffering; and that which we do in heaven with the Divine Es-

sence, you should do on earth with the Most Blessed Sacrament." Behold, then, our paradise on earth;—the Most Blessed Sacrament. O immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for us upon the cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed by so many sufferings, and by Thy death. Grant that Thou mayest be mine, and that I may never lose Thee, since Thou hast given Thyself to me, and givest Thyself every day, sacrificing Thyself for my love on the altar; and grant that I may be all Thine. I give myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will; chain it with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may for ever be the slave of Thy most holy will. I wish no longer to live for the satisfaction of my desires, but only to please Thy goodness. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee; grant me the grace never to have any other thought than to please Thee, any other desire than that which Thou desirest. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour, with my whole heart; I love Thee because Thou desirest that I should love Thee; I love Thee because Thou indeed art worthy of my love. I grieve that I love Thee not as much as Thou deservest. I desire, Lord, to die for Thy love; accept my desire, and give me Thy love. Amen.

Ejac. O good pleasure of my God, I sacrifice myself all to Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Mary says: "I am the Mother of fair love" (*Eccles.* xxiv. 24); that is to say, she is the Mother of that love which beautifies souls. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi saw the Most Blessed Virgin Mary going about dispensing a sweet liquid, which was Divine love. This gift is dispensed only by Mary; from Mary let us seek it.

Ejac. My Mother, my hope, make me belong wholly to Jesus.

The usual prayer.

FIFTH VISIT.

"The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." *Ps. lxxxiii. 4.*

The sparrow, says David, finds a dwelling in houses; turtle-doves in nests; but Thou, my King and my God, hast made Thyself a nest and found a dwelling on earth on our altars, that we might find Thee, and that Thou mightest dwell amongst us. Lord, we cannot but say, that Thou art too much enamoured of men; Thou no longer knowest what to do to gain their love. But do Thou, my most amiable Jesus, give us the grace that we also may be passionately enamoured of Thee. It would indeed be unreasonable were we cold in our love towards a God who loves us with such affection. Draw us to Thee by the sweet attractions of Thy love; make us understand the endearing claims which Thou hast on our love.

O infinite Majesty and infinite Goodness, Thou lovest men so much, Thou hast done so much that Thou mightest be loved by men: how is it, then, that amongst men there are so few who love Thee? I will no longer be as I have hitherto been, of the unhappy number of those ungrateful creatures: I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love no other than Thee: Thou deservest it; Thou commandest me with so much earnestness to do so, I am resolved to satisfy Thee. Grant, O God of my soul, that I may fully satisfy Thee. I entreat Thee to grant me this favour by the merits of Thy Passion, and I confidently hope for it. Bestow the goods of the earth on those who desire them; I desire and seek the great treasure of Thy love alone. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, infinite Goodness. Thou art all my riches, my whole satisfaction, my entire love.

Ejac. My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy whole self to me; I give my whole self to Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My Lady, St. Bernard calls thee 'the ravisher of

hearts.' He says, that thou goest about stealing hearts by the charms of thy beauty and goodness. Steal also my heart and will, I beseech thee: I give them wholly to thee; offer them to God with thine own.

Ejac. Mother most amiable, pray for me!

The usual prayer.

SIXTH VISIT.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
St. Luke xii. 34.

Jesus Christ says, that where a person esteems his treasure to be, there also he keeps his affections. Therefore the saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, centre their hearts and all their love in the Most Blessed Sacrament. My most amiable Jesus, hidden under the sacramental veils, who for the love which Thou bearest me remainest night and day imprisoned in this tabernacle, draw, I beseech Thee, my whole heart to Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may love and seek and hope for Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion, through which I seek and hope for it.

Ah, my Sacramental* Lord and Divine Lover, how amiable and tender are the inventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls! O Eternal Word, Thou, in becoming man, wast not satisfied with dying for us; Thou hast also given us this Sacrament as a companion, as food, and as a pledge of heaven. Thou reducest Thyself so as to appear amongst us, at one time as an infant in a stable, at another as a poor man in a workshop, then as a criminal on a gibbet, and now as bread on an altar. Tell me, couldst Thou invent other means to win our love? Oh infinite Goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond

* It is almost impossible to give the full force of the original, *sacramentato*, in English. The word *sacramental* has been adopted from time to time, to avoid the necessity of paraphrasing the expression. Literally translated it is *sacramented*, which is not English. Ed.

with such refinements of love? Lord, I will only live to love Thee alone. And of what use is life to me, if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast poured out Thy whole life for me? And what have I to love, if it is not Thee, who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving, all worthy of love? May my soul live only to love Thee; may the sole remembrance of Thy love dissolve my soul with love; may the very names of Crib, and Cross, and Sacrament inflame it with the desire to do great things for Thee, O my Jesus, who hast indeed done and suffered great things for me!

Ejac. Grant, my Lord, that before I die I may do something for Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"As a fair olive-tree in the plain." *Ecclus.* xxiv. 19.

I am, says Mary, the beautiful olive-tree, from which the oil of mercy always flows. And I stand in the plain, that all may see me, and that all may have recourse to me. 'Remember (let us say in the words of the prayer of St. Bernard), O most compassionate Mary, that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned by thee.' Most merciful Queen, such a thing was never heard of, that any one having recourse to thy aid was abandoned: I will not be the first unfortunate creature who, having recourse to thee, was abandoned.

Ejac. O Mary, grant me the grace always to have recourse to thee!

The usual prayer.

SEVENTH VISIT.

"Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." *St. Matt.* xxviii. 20.

Thus our loving Shepherd, who has given His life for

us who are His sheep, would not separate Himself from us by death. Behold Me, He says, beloved sheep, I am always with you; for you I have remained on earth in this Sacrament; here you find Me whenever you please, to help and console you by My presence: I will not leave you until the end of the world, as long as you are on earth. The Bridegroom, says St. Peter of Alcantara, wished to leave His bride company, that she might not remain alone during so long an absence; and therefore He left this Sacrament, in which He Himself, the best companion He could leave her, remains.

My sweetest Lord, my most amiable Saviour, I am now visiting Thee on this altar; but Thou returnest me the visit with far other love when Thou enterest my soul in the Holy Communion. Thou art then not only present to me, but Thou becomest my food; Thou unitest and givest Thy whole self to me, so that I can then say with truth, My Jesus, Thou art now all mine. Since, then, Thou givest Thyself all to me, it is reasonable that I should give myself all to Thee. I am a worm, and Thou art God. O God of love! O Love of my soul! when shall I find myself all Thine, in deeds, and not only in words? Thou canst do it; by the merits of Thy Blood increase my confidence, that I may at once obtain this grace of Thee, that I may find myself all Thine, and in nothing mine own. Thou graciously hearest, O Lord, the prayers of all; hear now the prayers of a soul who indeed desires really to love Thee. I desire to love Thee with all my strength, I desire to obey Thee in all that Thou wilt, without self-interest, without consolations, without reward. I wish to serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content Thy heart, which is so passionately enamoured of me. My reward will be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the Eternal Father, take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all I possess, and of my entire self, and give me Thyself. I love Thee, I seek after Thee, I sigh after Thee; I desire Thee, I desire Thee, I desire Thee!

Ejac. My Jesus, make me all Thine own!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

O our own most amiable Lady, the whole Church proclaims and salutes thee as 'our hope!' Thou, then, who art the hope of all, be also my hope. St. Bernard called thee 'the whole ground of his hope,' and said: 'Let him who despairs hope in thee.' Thus also will I address thee: My own Mary, thou savest even those who are in despair; in thee I place all my hope.

Ejac. Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

The usual prayer.

EIGHTH VISIT.

To every soul who visits Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, He addresses the words which He said to the Sacred Spouse: "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come" (Cant. 2:10). Thou soul which visitest Me, 'arise' from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with graces. ('Make haste,') approach, come near Me; fear not My Majesty, which has humbled itself in this Sacrament, in order to take away thy fear, and to give thee confidence. ('My beloved,') thou art no longer My enemy, but My friend; since thou lovest Me, and I love thee. ('My beautiful one,') My grace has made thee fair. 'And come,' draw near and cast thyself into My arms, and ask Me with the greatest confidence for whatever thou wilt.

St. Teresa says, that this great King of Glory has disguised Himself in the Sacrament under the species of bread, and that He has concealed His Majesty, to encourage us to approach His Divine Heart with greater confidence. Let us, then, draw near to Jesus with great confidence and affection; let us unite ourselves to Him, and let us ask Him for graces. O Eternal Word made man, and present for my sake in this Sacrament, what joy should be mine now that I stand in Thy presence, who art my God,

who art Infinite Majesty and Infinite Goodness, and hast so tender an affection for my soul! Ye souls who love God, wherever you may be, either in heaven or on earth, love Him for me also. Mary, my Mother, help me to love Him. And Thou, most beloved Lord, make Thyself the object of all my love. Make Thyself the Lord of my entire will; possess my entire self. I consecrate my whole mind to Thee, that it may always be occupied with the thought of Thy goodness; I also consecrate my body to Thee, that it may help me to please Thee; I consecrate my soul to Thee, that it may be all Thine. Would, O beloved of my soul, that all men could know the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest them, that all might live only to honour Thee and to please Thee, as Thou desirest and deservest. Grant that at least I may always live enamoured of Thy infinite beauty. From this day forward my desire is to do all that I can to be pleasing to Thee. I now resolve to abandon every thing, be it what it may, as soon as I perceive that it displeases Thee, however much it may cost me, even should it be necessary for this purpose to lose all, or even to lay down my life. Fortunate indeed shall I be, if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my Treasure, my Love, my All!

Ejac. Jesus, my love, take all that I have; take full possession of me!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me." *Prov.* ix. 4.

Mary invites all children who need a mother to have recourse to her, as to the most loving of all mothers. The devout Nicremberg says, that the love of all mothers is a shadow in comparison with the love which Mary bears to each one of us. My Mother, Mother of my soul, thou who lovest me, and desirest my salvation more than any other after God, O Mother, 'show thyself a Mother.'

Ejac. My Mother, grant that I may always remember thee!

The usual prayer.

NINTH VISIT.

St. John says that he saw our Lord girt up with a golden girdle, which supported His breasts: "I saw the Son of Man girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (Apoc. i. 12, 13). Thus also is Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, with His breasts all filled with milk; that is to say, with the graces which, in His mercy, He desires to bestow upon us. And as a mother, whose breasts are overcharged with milk, goes about seeking for children who may draw it off, and relieve her of its weight, so also does He call out to us, "You shall be carried at the breasts" (Is. lxvi. 12).

The Venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with His hands filled with graces, and seeking to whom He might dispense them. Of St. Catharine of Sienna it is related, that when she approached the Most Holy Sacrament, she did so precisely with the same loving avidity with which a child flies to its mother's breast.

O most beloved and only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, I know that Thou art the object most worthy of being loved. I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, or at least as much as a soul can ever desire to love Thee. I fully understand that I, who am a traitor, and so great a rebel to Thy love, deserve not to love Thee, neither do I deserve to approach Thee so near as I now am in this church. But I feel that Thou, for all this, seekest my love; I hear Thee say, "My son, give Me thy heart. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." I understand that it is for this end that Thou hast spared my life, and not sent me to hell, that I might be converted and turn all my affections to Thee. Since, then, Thou art pleased that even I should love Thee, oh, yes, my God, I will do so. Behold me: to Thee I yield myself up; I give myself to Thee; I love Thee. O God! all goodness, all love, I choose Thee for the only King and Lord of my poor heart. Thou desirest it, and my will is to give it to Thee: it is cold, it is loathsome; but if Thou acceptest it, Thou wilt change it. Change me, my Lord, change me; I no longer have courage to live as

I have hitherto done, ungrateful, and with so little love towards Thy infinite goodness, which loves me so much, and deserves an infinite love. Enable me to supply from this day forward for all the love which I have hitherto failed to bear Thee.

Ejac. My God, my God, I will love Thee, I will love Thee, I will love Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

In all things like to her Son Jesus is His Mother Mary; and as she is the Mother of Mercy, she is thrice happy when she helps and consoles the miserable. So great is the desire of this Mother to bestow graces on all, that Bernardine de Bustis says, that 'She desires more to do us good, and to impart to us graces, than we can desire to receive them.'

Ejac. Hail, our hope!

The usual prayer.

TENTH VISIT.

O foolish ones of the world, says St. Augustine, miserable creatures, where are you going to satisfy your hearts? Come to Jesus; for by Him alone can that pleasure which you seek be bestowed. "Unhappy creatures, whither are you going? The good you seek for comes from Him." My soul, be not of the number of these foolish ones; seek God alone: "seek for that one good in which are all good things." And if thou desirest soon to find Him, behold, He is close to thee; tell Him what thou desirest, for for this end it is that He is in the ciborium, to console thee, and to grant thy prayer. St. Teresa says, that all are not allowed to speak to their king; the most that can be hoped for is to communicate with him through a third person. To converse with thee, O King of Glory, no third person is needed; Thou art always ready in the Sacrament

of the Altar to give audience to all. All who desire Thee always find Thee there, and converse with Thee face to face. And even if any one at length succeeds in speaking with a king, how many difficulties has he had to overcome before he can do so! Kings grant audiences only a few times in the year; but Thou, in this Sacrament, grantest audience to all night and day, and whenever we please.

O Sacrament of Love, Thou who, whether Thou givest Thyself in the Communion, or dwellest on the altar, knowest, by the tender attractions of Thy love, how to draw so many hearts to Thyself, who, enamoured of Thee, and filled with amazement at the sight of such love, burn with joy, and think always of Thee; draw also my miserable heart to Thyself; for it desires to love Thee, and to live enslaved by Thy love. For my part, I now and from henceforward place all my interests, all my hopes, and all my affections, my soul, my body,—I place all in the hands of Thy goodness. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I will never again complain, O my Love, of Thy holy dispensations; I know that, as they all take their source in Thy loving Heart, they all will be full of love, and for my good. It is enough for me to know that Thou willest them; I will them also in time and in eternity. Do all that Thou willest in me and with me; I unite my entire self to Thy will, which is all holy, all good, all beautiful, all perfect, all loving. O Will of my God, how dear art thou to me! My will is ever to live and die united to and bound up with Thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I will that Thy desires shall also be my desires. My God, my God, help me; make me henceforward live for Thee alone; make me will alone what Thou willest, and make me live only to love Thy amiable will. Grant that I may die for Thy love, since Thou hast died and become food for me. I curse those days in which I did my own will, so much to Thy displeasure. I love thee, O Will of God, as much as I love God, since thou art one with Him. I love Thee, then, with my whole heart, and give myself all to Thee.

Ejac. O Will of God, thou art my love!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

The great Queen says, "With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me" (Prov. viii. 18, 21). Let us love Mary, if we would be rich in graces. The writer who calls himself 'the Idiot' styles her 'the treasurer of graces.' Blessed is he who has recourse to Mary with love and confidence. My Mother, my hope, thou canst make me a saint; from thee I hope for this favour.

Ejac. Mother most amiable, pray for me!

The usual prayer.

ELEVENTH VISIT.

'Let us be careful,' says St. Teresa, 'never to be at a distance from, or to lose sight of, Jesus our beloved Shepherd; for the sheep which are near their shepherd are always more caressed and better fed, and always receive some choice morsels of that which he himself eats. If by chance the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him, and either waits until his slumber ends, or itself awakens him; and it is then caressed with new favours.' My Redeemer, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, behold me near Thee: the only favour which I ask of Thee is, fervour and perseverance in Thy love.

I thank thee, O holy Faith; for thou teachest and assurest me that in the Divine Sacrament of the Altar, in that heavenly bread, bread does not exist; but that my Lord Jesus Christ is all there, and that He is there for love of me. My Lord and my All, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament; and though unknown to eyes of flesh, by the light of holy faith I discern Thee in the consecrated Host, as the Monarch of heaven and earth, and as the Saviour of the world. Ah, my most sweet Jesus! as Thou art my hope, my salvation, my strength, my consolation, so also I will that Thou shouldst be all my love, and the only subject of all my thoughts, of my desires, and

of my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme happiness which Thou enjoyest, and wilt enjoy for ever, than in any good thing which I could ever have in time or in eternity. My supreme satisfaction is, that Thou, my beloved Redeemer, art supremely happy, and that Thy happiness is infinite. Reign, reign, my Lord, over my whole soul; I give it all to Thee; do Thou ever possess it. May my will, my senses, and my faculties be all servants of Thy love, and may they never in this world serve for other than to give Thee satisfaction and glory. Such was thy life, O first lover and Mother of my Jesus! Most holy Mary, do thou help me; do thou obtain for me the grace to live henceforward, as thou didst always live, in the happiness of belonging to God alone.

Ejac. My Jesus, may I be all Thine, and be Thou all mine!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"Blessed is the man . . . that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors." *Prov. viii. 34.*

Blessed is he who, like the poor who stand before the gates of the rich, is careful to seek for the alms of graces before the doors of the mercy of Mary! And thrice blessed is he who moreover seeks to imitate the virtues which he remarks in Mary, and more especially her purity and humility!

Ejac. My hope, help me!

The usual prayer.

TWELFTH VISIT.

"God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." *1 St. John iv. 16.*

He who loves Jesus dwells with Jesus, and Jesus with him: "If any one love Me . . . My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with

him" (*St. John xiv. 23*). When St. Philip Neri received the Holy Communion as Viaticum, on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament enter his room, he exclaimed: 'Behold my Love! behold my Love!' Let each one of us, then, say, here in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Behold my Love! behold the object of all my love for my whole life and for all eternity!

Since, then, my Lord and my God, Thou hast said in the Gospel, that he who loves Thee will be beloved by Thee, and that Thou wilt come and dwell in him, and never more leave him, I love Thee above every other good: do Thou, then, also love me; for I, indeed, esteem being loved by Thee above all the kingdoms of the world. Come and fix Thy dwelling in the poor house of my soul in such a way that Thou mayest no more depart from me; or rather, so that I may never more drive Thee from me. Thou dost not go, if Thou art not expelled; but as I have already done this, so I might do again. Ah, never allow such a fresh act of wickedness, such horrible ingratitude, to be perpetrated in the world, as that I, who have been so especially favoured by Thee, and who have received so many graces, should again drive Thee from my soul! But this might happen: I therefore, my Lord, desire death, if it so pleases Thee; that by dying united to Thee, I may live united to Thee for ever. Yes, my Jesus; for this I hope. I embrace Thee; I press Thee to my poor heart: grant that I may always love Thee, and always be beloved by Thee. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love Thee; and Thou wilt always love me. I trust that our love will ever be mutual, O God of my soul, and this for all eternity. Amen.

Ejac. My Jesus, I desire always to love Thee, and always to be beloved by Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

"They that work by me shall not sin." *Eccles. xxiv. 30.*

He, says Mary, who endeavours to honour me shall persevere to the end. 'They that explain me shall have life everlasting:' and those who endeavour to make me

known and loved by others will be of the number of the elect. Promise, then, that whenever you can, be it in public or in private, you will speak of the glories of Mary, and of devotion to her.

Ejac. Vouchsafe that I may praise Thee, most sacred Virgin !

The usual prayer.

THIRTEENTH VISIT.

"My eyes and my heart shall be thine always." 3 *Kings* ix. 3.

Behold, Jesus has verified this beautiful promise in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein He dwells with us night and day. My Lord, would it not have been enough hadst Thou remained in this Sacrament only during the day, when Thou couldst have had adorers of Thy presence to keep Thee company ; but why remain also the whole night, when the churches are all closed, and when men retire to their homes, leaving Thee quite alone ? Ah, yes ! I already understand Thee : love has made Thee our prisoner ; the excessive love which Thou bearest us has so bound Thee down on earth, that neither night nor day canst Thou leave us. Ah, most amiable Saviour, this refinement of love alone should oblige all men ever to stay with Thee in the sacred ciborium, and to remain with Thee until forcibly compelled to leave Thee ; and when they do so, they should all leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and affections inflamed with love towards an Incarnate God, who remains alone and enclosed in a tabernacle, all eyes to see and provide for them in their necessities, and all heart to love them, and who awaits the coming day to be again visited by His beloved souls.

Yes, my Jesus, I will please Thee ; I consecrate my whole will and all my affections to Thee. O infinite Majesty of God, Thou hast left Thyself in this Divine Sacrament, not only that Thou mightest be present with and near us, but principally to communicate Thyself to Thy beloved

souls. But, Lord, who will presume to approach Thee to feed upon Thy flesh ? and who, on the other hand, can keep at a distance from Thee ? For this purpose Thou concealest Thyself in the consecrated Host, that Thou mayest enter into us and possess our hearts. Thou burnest with the desire of being received by us, and Thou rejoicest in being there united to us. Come, then, my Jesus, come ; I desire to receive Thee within myself, that Thou mayest be the God of my heart and of my will. All that is within me I yield, my dear Redeemer, to thy love ; satisfactions, pleasures, self-will, all I give up to Thee. O Love, O God of love, reign, triumph over my entire self ; destroy and sacrifice all in me which is mine and not Thine. Permit not, O my Love, that my soul, which, having received Thee in the Holy Communion, is filled with the Majesty of God, should again attach itself to creatures. I love Thee, my God, I love Thee ; and I will love Thee alone and for ever.

Ejac. Draw me by the chains of Thy love !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard exhorts us, saying : ' Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it by Mary.' ' She,' says St. Peter Damian, ' is the treasure of Divine graces.' She can enrich us, and she desires to do so. She therefore invites and calls us, saying : " Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me" (Prov. ix. 14). Most amiable Lady, most exalted Lady, most gracious Lady, look on a poor sinner, who recommends himself to Thee, and who places all his confidence in Thee.

Ejac. We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God !

The usual prayer.

FOURTEENTH VISIT.

Most amiable Jesus, I hear Thee say from this tabernacle

in which Thou art present, "This is my rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it" (Ps. cxxxix. 14). Since, then, Thou hast chosen Thy dwelling on our altars in the midst of us, remaining there in the Most Holy Sacrament, and since Thy love for us makes Thee there find Thy repose, it is but just that our hearts also should ever dwell with Thee in affection, and should find all pleasure and repose in Thee. Blessed are you, O loving souls, who can find no sweeter repose in the world than in remaining near to your Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament! And blessed should I be, my Lord, did I from this time forward find no greater delight than in remaining always in Thy presence, or in always thinking of Thee, who in the Most Holy Sacrament art always thinking of me and of my welfare. Ah, my Lord! and why have I lost so many years, in which I have not loved Thee? O miserable years, I curse you; and I bless thee, O infinite patience of my God, for having for so many years borne with me, though so ungrateful to Thy love. And still, notwithstanding this ingratitude, Thou waitest for me: and why, my God, why? It is, that one day, overcome by Thy mercies and by Thy love, I may yield wholly to Thee. Lord, I will no longer resist, I will no longer be ungrateful. It is but just that I should consecrate to Thee the time, be it long or short, which I have still to live. I hope for Thy help, O my Jesus, to become entirely Thine. Thou didst favour me so much when I fled from Thee and despised Thy love; how much more may I now hope that Thou wilt favour me, now that I seek and desire to love Thee! Give me, then, the grace to love Thee, O God, worthy of infinite love. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than myself, more than my life. I am sorry for having offended Thee, O infinite Goodness: pardon me; and with Thy pardon grant me the grace to love Thee much in this life until death, and in the next life for all eternity. O Almighty God, show the world the greatness of Thy power, in the prodigy of a soul ungrateful as mine has been becoming one of Thy greatest lovers. Do this by Thy merits, my Jesus. It is my ardent desire, and I re-

solve thus to love Thee during my whole life: do Thou, who inspirest me with this desire, give me also the strength to accomplish it.

Ejac. My Jesus, I thank Thee for having waited for me until now!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Germanus, addressing the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, says: 'No one is saved but through thee; no one is delivered from evils but through thee; there is no one on whom any gift is bestowed but through thee.' Therefore, my Lady and my hope, if thou dost not help me, I am lost, and shall be unable to bless thee in heaven. But, Lady, I hear all the saints say, that thou never abandonest those who have recourse to thee. He only is lost who has not recourse to thee. I, then, miserable creature that I am, have recourse to thee, and in thee place all my hopes.

Ejac. in the words of St. Bernard. Mary is my whole confidence; she is the whole ground of my hope!

The usual prayer.

FIFTEENTH VISIT.

"I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" *St. Luke xii. 49.*

Father Francis Olimpio, the Theatine, used to say, that there was nothing on earth which enkindled such ardent flames of Divine love in the hearts of men as the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord showed Himself to St. Catharine of Sienna in this Blessed Sacrament as a furnace of love, from which issued forth torrents of Divine flames, spreading themselves over the whole earth: so much so, indeed, that the saint, in perfect astonishment, wondered how it was possible that men could live without burning with love for such love on the part

of God towards them. My Jesus, make me burn with the desire of Thee; grant that all my thoughts, and sighs, and desires, and seekings, may be for Thee alone. Oh, happy should I be, did this Thy heavenly fire fully possess me, and as I advance in years, gradually consume all earthly affections in me!

O Divine Word! O my own Jesus! I see Thee all sacrificed, all annihilated, and so to say destroyed on the altar, for my love. It is, then, but right that, as Thou sacrifice Thyself as a victim of love for me, I at least should consecrate myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my God and my sovereign Lord, I now sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, all my will and my whole life. I unite this poor sacrifice of mine, O Eternal Father, with the infinite sacrifice of Himself which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, once offered to Thee on the cross, and which He now offers to Thee so many times every day on our altars. Accept it, then, through the merits of Jesus; and grant me the grace to renew it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole self to Thy honour. I desire the grace granted to so many martyrs, to die for Thy love. But if I am unworthy of so great a grace, grant at least, my Lord, that I may sacrifice my life to Thee, together with my entire will, by accepting the death which Thou sendest me. Lord, I desire this grace; I desire to die with the intention of honouring and pleasing Thee thereby: and from this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; and I offer Thee my death, when or wheresoever it may take place.

Ejac. My Jesus, I desire to die in order to please Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Allow me also, my most sweet Queen, to call thee, with thine own St. Bernard, 'the whole ground of my hope,' and to say, with St. John Damascene, 'I have placed my whole hope in thee.' Thou hast to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; thou, perseverance until death; thou, deliverance from purgatory. All who are saved obtain salvation through thee: thou, then, O Mary, hast to save me: 'He will be saved whom thou wilt.' Will, then,

my salvation, and I shall be saved. But thou savest all who invoke thee; behold, then, I invoke thee, and say:

Ejac. O salvation of those who invoke thee, save me!

The usual prayer.

SIXTEENTH VISIT.

[Had men but always recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament to seek from It the remedy for their ills, they certainly would not be as miserable as they are. The prophet Jeremias, lamenting, exclaimed: "Is there no balm in Galaad? or is there no physician there?" (Jer. viii, 22.) Galaad, a mountain of Arabia, rich in aromatical spices, according to Venerable Bede, is a figure of Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament keeps in readiness all the remedies for our woes. Why, then, our Redeemer seems to ask, do you complain of your misfortunes, O sons of Adam, when you have the Physician and the remedy for them all in this Sacrament? "Come to Me, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xxi, 28). I will, then, address Thee in the words of the sisters of Lazarus: "Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick" (St. John xi, 3). Lord, I am that miserable creature whom thou lovest; my soul is all wounded by the sins which I have committed: my Divine Physician, I come to Thee, that Thou mayest heal me; if thou wilt, Thou canst cure me: "Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee" (Ps. xli, 5). Draw me wholly to Thyself, my most sweet Jesus, by the all-winning attractions of Thy love. Far rather would I be bound to Thee than become the lord of the whole earth. I desire nothing else in the world but to love Thee. I have but little to give Thee; but could I gain possession of all the kingdoms of the world, I would do so, that I might renounce them all for Thy love. For Thee, then, I renounce what I can; I give up all relations, all comforts, all pleasures, and even spiritual consolations: for Thee I renounce my liberty and my will. On thee I desire to bestow all my love. I love Thee, infinite Good-

ness, I love Thee more than myself, and I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

Ejac. My Jesus, I give myself to Thee: do Thou accept me!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My Lady, thou didst say to St. Bridget: 'However much a man sins, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am instantly ready to welcome him: neither do I pay attention to the greatness of his sins, but to the intention alone with which he comes. I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy.' Since, then, thou hast both the power and the will to heal me, behold, I have recourse to thee, O heavenly physician; heal the many wounds of my soul: with a single word addressed by thee to thy Son I shall be restored.

Ejac. O Mary, have pity on me!

The usual prayer.

SEVENTEENTH VISIT.

Loving souls can find no greater delight than to be in the company of those whom they love. If we, then, love Jesus Christ much, behold we are now in His presence. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament sees us and hears us: shall we, then, say nothing to Him? Let us console ourselves in His company; let us rejoice in His glory, and in the love which so many enamoured souls bear Him in the Most Holy Sacrament: let us desire that all should love Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, and consecrate their hearts to Him; at least let us consecrate all our affections to Him. He should be all our love and our whole desire. Father Salesius, of the Society of Jesus, felt consolation in only speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament: he could never visit It enough: when called to the parlour, on returning to his

room, when going about the house, he always profited of these occasions to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord; so much so, that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day passed without his visiting Him. At length he obtained the favour to die by the hands of heretics while defending the truth of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Oh, had I but the happiness to die for so noble a cause as the defence of this Sacrament, in which, O most amiable Jesus, Thou hast taught us the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest us! But since, my Lord, Thou workest so many miracles in this Sacrament, work this one also: draw my entire self to Thee. Thou indeed desirest that I should be all Thine, and Thou dost also indeed deserve that I should be so. Give me the strength to love Thee with all the affection of my soul. Give the goods of this world to whomsoever Thou wilt. I renounce them all: I sigh after and desire Thy love alone; this alone do I now, and will always seek. I love Thee, my Jesus; grant me the grace always to love Thee, and grant me this alone.

Ejac. My Jesus, when shall I really love Thee?

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet Queen, how pleasing to me is that beautiful name by which thy devout clients address thee: 'Most amiable Mother!' Yes, my Lady, thou art truly and indeed amiable. Thy beauty has captivated thy Lord Himself: "And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty" (Ps. xlv. 12). St. Bernard says, that thy very name is so amiable to thy lovers, that when they pronounce or hear it, they are inflamed with a fresh desire to love thee: 'O sweet, O pious, O exceedingly amiable Mary! Thou canst not be named without inflaming, neither can thy name be heard without enkindling, the affections of those who love thee.' It is, then, reasonable, my most amiable Mother, that I should love thee. But I am not satisfied with only loving thee: I desire in the first place on earth, and then in heaven, to be, after God, thy greatest lover. If my desire is presumptuous, it is thou thyself who art to blame, on account of thy amiability, and the special love which

thou hast shown me. If thou wert less amiable, my desire to love thee would be less. Accept, then, O Lady, this my desire: and in token that thou hast accepted it, do thou obtain me from God this love for which I ask thee, since He is so well pleased with the love which is borne thee.

Ejac. My most amiable Mother, I love thee much!

The usual prayer.

EIGHTEENTH VISIT.

One day Jesus will be seated on a throne of majesty in the valley of Josaphat: but now, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He is seated on a throne of love. Did a king, to show his love for a poor shepherd, go and live in his village, how great would be the ingratitude of this peasant did he not often go to visit him, knowing the king's wish to see him, and that for this purpose he had come to reside there! Ah, my Jesus, for love of me Thou dwellest in the Sacrament of the Altar. Could I, then, do so, my desire would be to remain night and day in Thy presence. If the angels, O my Lord, filled with astonishment at the love which Thou bearest us, remain always around Thee, it is but reasonable that I, seeing Thee for my sake on this altar, should endeavour to please Thee, at least by remaining in Thy presence, to praise the love and goodness which Thou hast for me: "I will sing praise to Thee in the sight of the angels; I will worship towards Thy holy temple, and I will give glory to Thy name: for Thy mercy and for Thy truth" (Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 2).

O God, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, O Bread of angels, O heavenly food, I love Thee; but Thou art not, neither am I, satisfied with my love. I love Thee; but I love Thee too little. Do Thou, my Jesus, make known to me the beauty, the immense goodness which I love: make my heart banish from itself all earthly affections, and give place to Thy Divine love. To fill me with Thy love, and to unite Thyself all to me, Thou descendest every day

from heaven on our altars: it is, then, but just that I should think of nothing else but of loving, adoring, and pleasing Thee. I love Thee with my whole soul, I love Thee with all my affections. If Thou art graciously pleased to make me a return for this love, increase my love; render its flames more ardent; that thus I may always love Thee more, and desire more and more to please Thee.

Ejac. Jesus, my Love, give me love!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

As poor sick persons, who on account of their miseries are abandoned by all, find shelter in the public hospitals; so also do the most miserable sinners, who, although discarded by all, find protection in the mercy of Mary, by whom they are never rejected; for God has placed her in the world as a receptacle and as a public hospital for sinners, as St. Basil of Seleucia gives us to understand. Hence St. Ephrem also calls her 'the asylum of sinners.' Therefore, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, thou canst not reject me on account of my sins; nay, even the more wretched I am, the greater is the claim which I have upon thy protection, since God has created thee as the refuge of the most miserable. Therefore to thee I have recourse, O Mary; I place myself under thy mantle. Thou art the refuge of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge, the hope of my salvation. If thou reject me, to whom shall I have recourse?

Ejac. Mary, my refuge, save me!

The usual prayer.

NINETEENTH VISIT.

It is sweet to every one to be in the company of a dear friend: and shall we not find it sweet, in this valley of tears, to remain in the company of the best Friend we have, and who can do us every kind of good; who loves us

with the most tender affection, and therefore dwells always with us? Behold, in the Most Blessed Sacrament we can converse at pleasure with Jesus, we can open our hearts to Him, we can lay our wants before Him, and we can ask Him for His graces; in a word, in this Sacrament we can treat with the King of Heaven, in all confidence and without restraint. Joseph was only too happy when, as the sacred Scripture tells us, God descended by His grace into his prison to comfort him: "She went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not" (Wisd. x, 13). But we are yet more highly favoured; for we have always with us in this land of miseries our God made Man, who, by His Real Presence, is with us all the days of our life, and comforts and helps us with the greatest affection and compassion. What a consolation it is to a poor prisoner to have an affectionate friend, who keeps him company, consoles him, gives him hope, succours him, and thinks of relieving him in his misery! Behold our good Friend Jesus Christ, who in this Sacrament encourages us, saying: "Behold, I am with you all days." Behold Me, He says, all thine: I am come from heaven into thy prison expressly to console thee, to help thee, to deliver thee. Welcome Me, and do so always; cling to Me, and thus thou wilt never feel thy miseries; and afterwards thou wilt come with Me to My kingdom, where I shall make thee perfectly happy.

O God, O incomprehensible ocean of love, since Thy condescension towards us is so great, that in order to dwell near us Thou descendest upon our altars, I propose often to visit Thee; I am determined, as often as I possibly can, to enjoy Thy most sweet Presence, which is the beatitude of the saints in heaven. Oh, could I but always remain in Thy Presence, to adore Thee, and to make Thee acts of love! Arouse, I beseech Thee, my soul, when through tepidity or worldly affairs it neglects to visit Thee. Enkindle in me a great desire always to remain near Thee in this Sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! would that I had always pleased Thee! I console myself that I still have time to do so, not only in the next life, but also in this. I am determined

to do so; I am determined to love Thee indeed, my Sovereign Good, my Love, my Treasure, my All. I will love Thee with all my strength.

Ejac. My God, help me to love Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

The devout Bernardine de Bustis says: 'O sinner, whoever you may be, despair not; but with confidence have recourse to this Lady: you will find her hands filled with mercies and graces. And know also,' he adds, 'that this most compassionate Queen has a greater desire to do you good than you can have to be succoured by her.' I will ever, O my Lady, thank God for having taught me to know thee. Unfortunate indeed should I be, did I not know thee, or did I forget thee. Ill would it fare with my salvation. But, my Mother, I bless thee, I love thee; and so great is my confidence in thee, that I place my whole soul in thy hands.

Ejac. O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee, and puts his trust in thee!

The usual prayer.

TWENTIETH VISIT.

The prophet Zacharias says: "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner" (ch. xiii. 1). Jesus in the Holy Sacrament is the fountain foretold by the prophet, as open to all; and to which we can go whenever we please, to wash our souls from all the stains of sin which are daily contracted. When any one falls into some fault, what more beautiful remedy is there than to have immediate recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament? Yes, my Jesus, I resolve always to do this; for I know that the waters of this fountain of Thine not only cleanse me, but also give me light, and strengthen me not to fall, and enable me cheerfully to bear contradictions,

and also inflame me with Thy love. I know that for this end it is that Thou awaitest my visits, and recompensest those of Thy lovers with so many graces. My Jesus, delay not; but wash me now from all the defects which I have committed this day, and for which I am grieved because they have displeased Thee; strengthen me against relapse by giving me a great desire to love Thee much. Oh, could I but always dwell near Thee, as did Thy faithful servant Mary Diaz, who lived in the time of St. Teresa, and had permission from the Bishop of Avila to inhabit the tribune of a church, where she remained almost always in the Presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which she called her neighbour, and which she only left to go to confession and communion. When the Venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, passed before a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he could not refrain from entering to visit it, saying: 'That it was not becoming for a friend to pass before the door of a friend without entering, at least to salute him and exchange a word.' But a word did not satisfy him; he always remained as long as obedience allowed him in the Presence of his beloved Lord.

My only and infinite Good, I see that Thou hast instituted this Sacrament, and that Thou remainest on this altar, to be loved by me; and that for this end Thou hast given me a heart capable of loving Thee much. Why is it, then, that I am so ungrateful as not to love Thee? or that I love Thee so little? Now it is not just that such goodness as Thou art should be so little loved. The love, at least, which Thou bearest me, deserves other and greater love on my part. Thou art an infinite God, and I am a miserable worm. It would be little, did I die for Thee, or wear myself out for Thee, who didst die for me, and dost sacrifice Thy entire self for me every day on the altar. Thou deservest to be much loved; I will love Thee much: help me, my Jesus, help me to love Thee, and to do that which pleases Thee so much, and which Thou so earnestly seekest of me.

Ejac. My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet, most compassionate, most amiable Queen, oh, how great is the confidence with which St. Bernard inspires me when I have recourse to thee! He says, that thou dost not go examining the merits of those who have recourse to thy compassion; but that thou offerest thyself to help all who pray to thee: 'Mary does not discuss merits, but shows herself ready to hear and welcome all.' Therefore, if I pray to thee, thou dost graciously hear me. Well, then, listen to what I have to ask thee: I am a poor sinner, deserving of a thousand hells. I wish to change my life; I wish to love my God, whom I have so greatly offended. I dedicate myself to thee as thy slave; to thee I give myself, miserable as I am; save, then, a poor creature who is no longer his own, but thine. My Lady, dost thou understand me? Yes; I trust that thou hast understood me, and graciously heard my prayer.

Ejac. O Mary, I am thine; save me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FIRST VISIT.

"Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together." *St. Luke xvi. 37.*

The Saints generally understand by this body that of Jesus Christ; and by the eagles, souls who, being detached from creatures, rise above the things of the earth, and fly towards heaven, after which they always sigh in thought and affection, and where they constantly dwell. These eagles also find their paradise on earth wherever they find Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament; so much so, indeed, that they seem never to tire hovering around Him. If eagles, says St. Jerome, on scenting a dead body go from afar to seek it, how much more should we run and fly to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as to the most delicious food of our hearts! Hence Saints in this valley of tears have always

as parched harts run to this fountain of paradise. Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, in whatever occupation he was engaged, used often to cast his eyes towards the place in which he knew that the Blessed Sacrament was; he often visited It, and even spent entire nights before It. He used to weep when he saw the palaces of the great ones of this world filled with people, who courted a man from whom they hoped for some miserable earthly good, and the churches so abandoned, in which the supreme Sovereign of the world dwells, and remains with us as on a throne of love, rich in immense and eternal treasures. He used also to say, that religious persons were indeed fortunate, because in the very houses in which they reside, they can, whenever they please, either night or day, visit this great Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and this lay people cannot do.

Since, then, my most loving Lord, notwithstanding that Thou seest me as a leper, and so ungrateful to Thy love, Thou invitest me to approach Thee, I will not be discouraged at the sight of my miseries: I come and approach Thee; but do Thou wholly change me. Drive from me every love which is not for Thee, every desire which displeases Thee, every thought which does not tend towards Thee. My Jesus, my Love, my Treasure, my All, I am determined to please Thee alone. I will give pleasure to Thee alone. Thou alone deservest all my love; Thee alone will I love with my whole heart. Detach me from every thing, my Lord, and bind me to Thyself alone; but bind me so firmly, that I may never more be able to separate myself from Thee, either in this life or in the next.

Ejac. My most sweet Jesus, never allow me to be separated from Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Denis, the Carthusian, calls the Most Blessed Virgin 'the advocate of all the wicked who have recourse to her.' Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to defend the causes of the most guilty criminals who have recourse to thee, behold me now at thy feet; to thee I have re-

course, and I address thee in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: 'O gracious advocate, fulfil thy charge.' Now quickly enter upon thy office, undertake my cause: it is true that I have indeed been guilty before my Lord, having offended Him, after the many benefits and graces He has conferred upon me; but the evil is done; thou canst save me. Thou hast only to tell thy God that thou defendest me, and then I shall be forgiven, and shall be saved.

Ejac. My dear Mother, thou hast to save me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT.

The Spouse in the sacred Canticles went about seeking for her Beloved; and not finding Him, she asked all whom she met: "Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?" (Cant. iii. 3.) Jesus was not then on earth; but now, if a soul which loves Him seeks Him, she can always find Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The venerable father, Master Avila, used to say, that amongst all sanctuaries he could neither find nor desire a more delightful one than a church in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love! And how couldst Thou, my Jesus, ever abase Thyself so far as, in order to dwell amongst men, and to unite Thyself to their hearts, to humble Thyself to such a point as to conceal Thyself under the species of bread? O incarnate Word, Thou art supreme in Thy humility, because Thou art supreme in Thy love! How can I do otherwise than love Thee with my entire self, knowing as I do how much Thou hast done to captivate my love? I love Thee much; and therefore I give Thy good pleasure the preference above every interest and every satisfaction of my own. My pleasure is to give Thee pleasure, my Jesus, my God, my Love, my All. Make me hunger to be continually in Thy presence in the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Thee into myself, and to keep Thee company. I should be in-

deed ungrateful, did I not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah, Lord, annihilate in me all affection for created things! Thou wilt that Thou alone, my Creator, shouldst be the object of all my sighs, of all my love. I love Thee, most amiable goodness of my God. I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. I desire not my own pleasure; Thy pleasure is all my desire, and sufficient for me. Accept, my Jesus, this good desire of a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Help me by Thy grace. Grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may from this day forward be the happy slave of Thy love.

Ejac. I love Thee, Jesus, my Treasure, above every other treasure!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most sweet Lady and Mother, I am a vile rebel to thy great Son; but I come repentant to thy mercy, that thou mayest obtain me pardon. Say not that thou canst not do so; for St. Bernard calls thee 'the minister of propitiation.' To thee also it belongs to succour those who are in dangers, St. Ephrem calling thee 'the helper of those in peril.' My Lady, who is in greater danger than I am? I have lost God: it is certain that I have been condemned to hell. I know not whether God has yet pardoned me. I may again lose Him. But thou canst obtain me all; and from thee I hope for every good, for forgiveness, perseverance, and heaven. I hope to be one of those who, in the kingdom of the blessed, will most praise thy mercies, O Mary, for having saved me by thy intercession.

Ejac. I will sing the mercies of Mary for all eternity; I will sing them for ever and ever! Amen, amen.

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT.

[Many Christians submit to great fatigue, and expose

themselves to many dangers, to visit the places in the Holy Land where our most loving Saviour was born, suffered, and died. We need not undertake so long a journey, or expose ourselves to so many dangers; the same Lord is near us, and dwells in the church, only a few steps distant from our houses. If pilgrims, says St. Paulinus, consider it a great thing to bring back a little dust from the crib, or from the holy sepulchre in which Jesus was buried; with what ardour should not we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus is in person, and where we can go without encountering so much fatigue and so many dangers! A religious person, to whom God gave great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament, amongst other things wrote as follows in a letter: 'I see that every good thing that I have comes to me from the Most Blessed Sacrament. I have given and consecrated my whole self to Jesus in this Sacrament. I see innumerable graces, which are not granted because people do not go to this Divine Sacrament. I see the great desire that our Lord has to dispense His graces in the Sacrament. O holy mystery! O sacred Host! Where is it that God manifests His power the most, if it is not in this Host? For this Host contains all that God has ever done for us. Let us not envy the blessed who are in heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, with greater wonders of His love. Endeavour that all with whom you speak should devote themselves to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I speak thus, because this Sacrament makes me beside myself. Neither can I cease speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which deserves so greatly to be loved. I know not what to do for Jesus in this Sacrament.' Thus the letter ends.

O Seraphim, who remain sweetly burning with love around your and my Lord; though it is not indeed for love of you but of me that this King of Heaven is pleased to be present in this Sacrament,—O loving Angels, let me also burn with love; and do you enkindle your love in me, that with you I also may burn! O my Jesus, teach me to know the greatness of the love which Thou bearest to men, that at the sight of so great love, my desire to love Thee and please Thee may go on always increasing! I

love Thee, most amiable Lord, and will always love Thee; and this alone to please Thee.

Ejac. My Jesus, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Most amiable Virgin, St. Bonaventure calls thee 'the Mother of orphans;' and St. Ephrem, moreover, calls thee 'the receiver of orphans.' Alas, these wretched orphans are no others than poor sinners who have lost God! Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, most holy Mary. I have lost my Father; but thou art my Mother, who must enable me to recover Him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid; do thou succour me. Shall I remain disconsolate? No; for Innocent III., speaking of thee, asks, 'Who ever called upon her, and was not graciously heard by her?' And who ever prayed to thee, and was not heard and helped by thee? Who was ever lost who had recourse to thee? He alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Then, my Queen, if thou desirest my salvation, enable me always to invoke and confide in thee.

Ejac. My own most holy Mary, give me confidence in thee!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT.

"Verily Thou art a hidden God." *Is. xlv. 15.*

In no other work of Divine love are these words so fully verified as in this adorable mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament, where our God is entirely hidden. When the Eternal Word took flesh, He hid His divinity, and appeared as a man on earth; but remaining with us in this Sacrament, He hides even His humanity, and, as remarks St. Bernard, appears only under the form of bread, to show thereby the tenderness of the love which He bears

us: 'The Divinity is hid, the Humanity is hid; the bowels of charity alone appear.'⁷ O my Beloved Redeemer, at the sight of the excessive tenderness Thou hast for men, I am beside myself, my Lord, and know not what to say. In this Sacrament Thou goest so far for their love as to hide Thy majesty and lower Thy glory; Thou goest so far as even to consume and annihilate Thy Divine life. And whilst Thou art on the altar Thou seemest to have nothing else to do than to love men, and to show them the love which Thou bearest them. And what gratitude do they show Thee in return, O great Son of God?

O Jesus, O too great Lover of men, allow me so to say, for I see that Thou preferrest their advantage to Thine own glory. [And didst Thou not know to how much contempt this loving design of Thine would expose Thee? I see, and before me Thou didst see it full well Thyself, that the greater part of men adore Thee not, neither will they acknowledge Thee for what Thou art in this Sacrament. I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated Hosts, that they have thrown them on the ground, into water, and into fire.] And I see the greater part even of those who believe in Thee, O God, who, so far from repairing so many outrages by the homage of their devotion, either come to the church to offend Thee still more by their irreverences, or else abandon Thee on Thy altar, and sometimes even leave it unprovided with a lamp or the necessary ornaments!

Oh, could I, my most sweet Saviour, but wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those unhappy places in which, in this Sacrament, Thy love and Thy enamoured Heart have been so greatly outraged! But if so much is not granted me, I desire at least, my Lord, and determine, to visit Thee often, in order to adore Thee as I now adore Thee, and this in compensation for the insults which Thou receivest in this most Divine mystery. Accept, O Eternal Father, this scanty honour, which I, the most miserable of men, now offer Thee in reparation of the outrages offered to Thy Son in the Most Holy Sacrament; accept it in union with that infinite honour which Jesus Christ gave

Thee on the cross, and which He daily gives Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament. O my Sacramental Jesus, would that I could fill all men with love for the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Ejac. O amiable Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

My most powerful Lady, in the midst of my misgivings as to my eternal salvation, how great is the confidence which I feel when I have recourse to thee; and when I think that thou, my Mother, art, on the one hand, so rich in graces, that St. John Damascene calls thee 'a sea of graces;' St. Bonaventure, 'the assemblage of graces,' that is, the source in which all graces are congregated; St. Ephrem, 'a fountain of grace and of all consolation;' and St. Bernard, 'the fulness of every good;'—and when, on the other hand, I reflect that thy desire to do us good is so great, that thou esteemest thyself offended, as St. Bonaventure says, by him who does not ask thee for thy graces: 'they sin against thee, O Lady,' he says, 'who do not ask of thee;'—O most rich, O most wise, and most merciful Queen, I see that thou knowest far better than I do the wants of my soul, and that thou lovest me far more than I can love thee! Know, then, the grace for which I now ask thee; obtain me the grace which thou knowest to be the most expedient for my soul. Ask this favour from God, and I am satisfied.

Ejac. My God, grant me the graces which Mary asks Thee for me!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT.

St. Paul praises the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying, that He obeyed His Eternal Father even to death: "be-

coming obedient even unto death" (Phil. ii. 8). But in this Sacrament He has gone still further; for here He has been pleased to become obedient, not only to His Eternal Father, but also to man; and not only to death, but as long as the world shall last; so that we can say: 'He has become obedient even unto the consummation of the world.' He, the King of Heaven, comes down from heaven in obedience to man, and then seems to dwell and converse there, in order to obey men: "And I do not resist" (Is. 50: X 5). There He remains without moving Himself; He allows Himself to be placed where men will, be it for exposition in the remonstrance, or to be enclosed in the tabernacle; He allows Himself to be carried wheresoever He is borne, be it into houses or through the streets; He allows Himself to be given in communion to whomsoever He is administered, be they just or sinners. St. Luke says, that whilst He dwelt on earth He obeyed the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph; but in this Sacrament He obeys as many creatures as there are priests on earth: "and I do not resist." Permit me now to address Thee, O most loving Heart of my Jesus, from which indeed all the Sacraments flowed forth, but principally this Sacrament of Love. I would gladly give Thee as much glory and honour as Thou givest in the Holy Sacrament in our churches to the Eternal Father. I know that on this altar Thou still lovest me with that same love with which Thou didst love me when Thou didst close Thy Divine life in the midst of so much anguish on the cross. O Divine Heart, enlighten all those who know Thee not with the knowledge of Thyself! Through Thy merits deliver from, or at least relieve, the pains of the afflicted souls in purgatory, who are already Thy spouses for all eternity. I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee, in union with all souls who in this moment love Thee, be they on earth or in heaven. O most pure Heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with Thy holy love! O most sweet Heart, possess my whole heart, so that from henceforward it may be all Thine, and always be enabled to say: "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" (Rom. viii. 39.)

Write, O most sacred Heart, upon my heart all the bitter sorrows which for so many years Thou didst endure on earth with so much love for me, that, on seeing them, I may from henceforward desire, or at least endure with patience, all the sorrows of this life. Most humble Heart of Jesus, give me a share of Thy humility. Most meek Heart, impart Thy sweetness to me. Take from my heart all that displeases Thee; convert it wholly to Thee, so that I may no longer will or desire other than what Thou wilt. In a word, grant that I may live only to obey Thee, only to love Thee, only to give Thee pleasure. I know that I, indeed, owe Thee much; and that Thou hast, indeed, placed me under great obligations: it will be but little if I consume and wear myself out for Thee.

Ejac. O Heart of Jesus, Thou art the sole Lord of my heart!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard says, that Mary is that heavenly ark, in which, if we take timely refuge, we shall certainly be delivered from the shipwreck of eternal damnation: 'She is the ark in which we escape shipwreck.' The ark in which Noe escaped from the general wreck of the world was indeed a type of Mary. But Hesychius says, that Mary is a more spacious, stronger, and more compassionate ark. Only a few men and a few beasts were received and saved by the former; but Mary, our ark, receives all who take refuge under her mantle, and with certainty saves them all. Unfortunate should we be, had we not Mary! But still, my Queen, how many are lost! and why? Because they have not recourse to thee. And who would ever be lost, had he recourse to thee?

Ejac. Grant, most holy Mary, that we may all and always have recourse to thee!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT.

"Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion: for great is He that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel." *Is.* xii. 6.

O God, and what joy ought not we men to conceive, what hopes and what affections, in knowing that in the midst of our land, in our churches, near our houses, the Holy of holies, the true God, dwells and lives in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar! He who by His presence alone renders the saints in heaven blessed! He who is love itself. 'It is not so much that He has love, as that He is love itself,' says St. Bernard. This Sacrament is not only a sacrament of love, but is love itself; it is God Himself, who, for the immense love which He bears His creatures, calls Himself, and is, love itself: "God is love" (1 St. John iv. 8). But I hear Thee complain, O my Sacramental Jesus: "I was a stranger, and you took Me not in" (St. Matt. xxv. 43); that Thou camest on earth to be our guest for our good, and that we have not welcomed Thee. Thou art right, Lord, Thou art right; and I am one of these ungrateful creatures who have left Thee alone, without even visiting Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest; but not by depriving me of Thy presence, which is the chastisement I deserve: no, I will repair my fault, and the indignities which I have heaped upon Thee. From this day forward I will not only visit Thee often, but will remain with Thee for as long a time as I can. O most compassionate Saviour, be pleased to make me faithful to Thee; and grant that I may also, by my example, excite others to keep Thee company in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I hear the Eternal Father, who says: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (St. Matt. xvii. 5). A God, then, finds all His complacency in Thee; and shall not I, a miserable worm, find mine in dwelling with Thee in this valley of tears! O consuming Fire, destroy in me all affections for earthly things; for they alone can render me unfaithful, and take me away from Thee. Thou canst do so, if Thou wilt: "Lord, if Thou

wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (St. Matt. viii. 2). Thou hast already done so much for me, do this also: banish from my heart all love which does not tend towards Thee. Behold, I give myself all to Thee: I now dedicate the whole remainder of my life to the love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thou, O Sacramental Jesus, hast to be my comfort, my love in life, and at the hour of my death, when Thou wilt come to be my Viaticum and my guide: to Thy blessed kingdom. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be!

Ejac. When, O my Jesus, shall I behold Thy beautiful face!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

In thee, our own most holy Mother, we find the remedy for all our woes; in thee we find strength in our weakness; for St. Germanus calls thee the 'strength itself of our weakness.' In thee we find a door by which to make our exit from the slavery of sin; for St. Bonaventure calls thee 'the gate of liberty.' In thee we find our certain peace; for the same saint calls thee 'the safe repose of men.' In thee we find relief in our miserable life. Thou art 'the solace of our pilgrimage,' as St. Laurence Justinian calls thee. In thee, in a word, we find Divine grace and God Himself; for St. Bonaventure calls thee 'the throne of God's grace;' and St. Proclus, 'the bridge by which God descends to men;' that happy bridge by which God, who had been driven to a distance by our sins, returns to dwell by His grace in our souls.

Ejac. O Mary, thou art my strength, my deliverance, my peace, and salvation!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT.

The holy Church sings in the Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament: 'There is no other country, however great,

whose gods are nigh it as our God is nigh to us.' When the Gentiles heard how far our God carried His works of love, they exclaimed: Oh, how good a God is this God of the Christians! And, indeed, notwithstanding that the Gentiles imagined their gods according to their own caprices,—yet, read history, and in all their fables, and among the many gods they invented, you will never find that they went so far as even to imagine a god as enamoured of men as is our true God; who, to show His love for His adorers, and to enrich them with graces, has worked such a prodigy of love as to become their constant companion, and to remain night and day concealed on their altars, seeming as if He knew not how to separate Himself from them, even for a moment: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works" (Ps. cx. 4). Thou, then, my most sweet Jesus, hast been pleased to work the greatest of Thy miracles in order to satisfy the excessive desire which Thou hast to remain always near and present to us. Why, then, do men fly from Thy presence? And how can they live for so long a time at a distance from Thee, or visit Thee so seldom? How is it, that when in Thy presence they get so weary that a quarter of an hour appears an age? Oh, patience of my Jesus, how great art Thou! Yes, my Lord, I understand Thee; Thy patience is great, because the love Thou bearest to men is great: and this it is which, so to say, forces Thee to dwell always in the midst of such ungrateful creatures.

Ah, my God, who, because Thou art infinite in perfections, art also infinite in love, permit not that I should for the future be, as I have hitherto been, of the number of these ungrateful ones. Grant me a love equal to Thy merits and to my own obligations. At one time I also was weary in Thy presence, either because I loved Thee not, or because I loved Thee too little; but if by Thy grace I am enabled to love Thee much, I shall no longer find it tedious to remain even for whole days and nights at Thy feet in the Most Holy Sacrament. O Eternal Father, I offer Thee Thine own Son Himself; accept Him for me, and through His merits give me so ardent and tender a love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament, that,

constantly turning towards some church in which He dwells, I may think of, and desire with longing anxiety, the time when I may be able to go and entertain myself in His presence.

Ejac. My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Mary is that tower of David, of which the Holy Ghost says in the sacred Canticles: "It is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men" (Cant. iv. 4). A tower built with a thousand fortresses, and containing a thousand shields and weapons, for the benefit of those who have recourse to it. Thou art, then, O most holy Mary, a most powerful defence for all those who are engaged in battle. Oh, how constantly are my enemies attacking me, in order to deprive me of the grace of God and of thy protection, my most dear Lady! But thou art my strength. Thou, indeed, dost not disdain to battle for those who trust in thee; for St. Ephrem calls thee 'the bulwark of all who confide in thee.' Do thou, then, defend and fight for me, who have such great hope and confidence in thee.

Ejac. Mary, Mary, thy name is my defence!

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT.

God, having given us His own Son, says St. Paul, what good thing is there that we can fear He might deny us? "How hath He not also with Him given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) We know, indeed, that all that the Eternal Father has He has given to Jesus Christ: "The Father has given Him all things into His hands" (St. John xiii. 3). Let us, then, ever thank the goodness, the mercy, the liberality of our most loving God, who has been pleased

to make us rich in all good things, and in every grace, by giving us Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar: "In all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace" (1 Cor. i. 5, 7).

Therefore, O Saviour of the world, O Incarnate Word, if I desire to have Thee, I can really think that Thou art mine, and all mine. But can I at the same time say that I am all Thine, as Thou desirest? Ah, my Lord, prevent it; and never let the world witness such disorder and such ingratitude, as that I should not be Thine when Thou desirest me!

Ah, no; let it never be! If it has been so hitherto, let it never be so again. I now, with the utmost determination, consecrate myself entirely to Thee; for time and eternity I consecrate my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, my sufferings, to Thee. Behold me all Thine; as a victim consecrated to Thee, I bid farewell to creatures, and offer my whole self to Thee. Consume me with the flames of Thy Divine love. No, I am determined that creatures shall no longer share my heart. The proofs which Thou hast given me of the love which Thou bearest me, even at a time when I did not love Thee, make me hope that Thou certainly acceptest me now that I love Thee, and out of love give myself to Thee.

Eternal Father, I now offer Thee all the virtues, the actions, the affections, of the Heart of Thy dear Jesus. Accept them, and by His merits, which are all mine—for He has given them to me,—grant me the graces which Jesus asks Thee for me. With these merits I thank Thee for the many mercies which Thou hast shown me; with these I satisfy for what I owe Thee for my sins; through these I hope for every grace from Thee,—pardon, perseverance, Paradise, and above all, the crowning gift of Thy pure love. I well see that to all these gifts I myself place impediments; but do Thou also remedy this. I ask it of Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised, "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do" (St. John xiv. 13, 14). Then Thou canst not refuse me. Lord, my only desire is to love Thee, to give myself to Thee without reserve, and no longer to be ungrateful to Thee, as I have

hitherto been. Behold me, and graciously hear me ; grant that this may be the day of my entire conversion to Thee, so that I may never more cease to love Thee. I love Thee, my God ! I love Thee, Infinite Goodness ! I love Thee, my Love, my Paradise, my Good, my Life, my All !

Ejac. My Jesus, who art all mine, Thou desirest me, and I desire Thee !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

What relief do I feel in my miseries, and what consolation in my tribulations, what strength do I not find in the midst of temptations, when I remember and call thee to my aid, O my most sweet and most holy Mother, Mary ! Yes, indeed, you were right, O ye Saints, in calling my Lady 'the haven of those who are in tribulation,' with St. Ephrem ; 'the repairer of our calamities,' and 'the solace of the miserable,' with St. Bonaventure ; and 'the rest from our mournings,' with St. Germanus. My own Mary, do thou console me. I see myself loaded with sins, and surrounded by enemies ; without virtue, and cold in my love towards God. Comfort me, comfort me ; and let my consolation be to make me begin a new life, a life which will be really pleasing to thy Son and to thee.

Ejac. Change me, O Mary my Mother : change me ; thou canst do it !

The usual prayer.

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT.

"Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock." *Apoc.* iii. 20.

O most loving Shepherd, who, not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself once to death on the altar of the Cross for the love of Thy sheep, hast moreover been pleased to hide Thyself in this Divine Sacrament on the altars of our churches, to be always nearer to, and to knock at the doors of our hearts, and thus obtain Thy admission ! Ah, did I

but know how to enjoy Thy nearness to me as did the Sacred Spouse in the Canticles, who says : "I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired" (Cant. ii. 3). Ah, did I but love Thee, did I but really love Thee, my most amiable Sacrament, I also should wish never to leave the foot of a tabernacle either night or day ; and fixing myself near Thy Majesty, concealed under the apparent shadow of the sacred species, I also should find those Divine sweetnesss and that happiness which souls enamoured of Thee there find. Ah, do Thou be graciously pleased to draw me by the odour of Thy beauties, and of the immense love which Thou manifestest in this Sacrament : "Draw me : we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments" (Cant. i. 3). Yes, my Saviour, I will leave creatures and all earthly pleasures, to run after Thee in this Sacrament : "As olive-plants, round about Thy table" (Ps. cxxvii. 3). Oh, what abundant fruits of virtues do those happy souls, like olive-plants, bring forth to God, who assist with love before the sacred tabernacle ! But I am ashamed to appear before Thee, O my Jesus, so naked and so devoid of all virtues. Thou hast commanded that all who approach the altar to honour Thee should present a gift : "Thou shalt not appear empty before Me" (Ex. xxiii. 15). What, then, am I to do ? Am I no more to appear before Thee ? Ah, no ; this would not please Thee. Poor as I am, I will approach Thee ; and do Thou provide me with the gifts which Thou desirest. I see that Thou dwellest in the Sacrament, not only to reward Thy lovers, but also to provide for the poor out of Thy riches.

Be it so, then ; let us now begin. I adore Thee, O King of my heart, and true Lover of men. O Shepherd, loving Thy sheep beyond all bounds, to this Throne of Thy love I now approach ; and having nothing else to present to Thee, I offer Thee my miserable heart, that it may be entirely consecrated to Thy love and to Thy good pleasure. With this heart I can love Thee, and I will love Thee as much as I can. Draw it, then, to Thyself, and bind it wholly to Thy will, so that, filled with consolation, it may be able from henceforth to say, as Thy dear disciple said, that it is bound by the chains of Thy love : "I, Paul, the

prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 1). Unite me, my Lord, entirely to Thyself, and make me forget myself, that I may have the happiness one day to lose all things, and even myself, to find Thee alone, and to love Thee for ever. I love Thee, my Sacramental Lord; to Thee do I bind myself, to Thee do I unite myself; make me find Thee, make me love Thee, and never more separate Thyself from me.

Ejac. My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard calls Mary 'the royal road of the Saviour;' the safe road by which to find the Saviour and salvation. Since, then, it is true, O Queen, that thou art, as the same Saint says, 'the chariot in which our souls go to God,'—the one who guides us to Him,—ah, Lady, thou must not suppose that I shall advance towards God, if thou dost not carry me in thine arms! Carry me, carry me; and if I resist, carry me by main force; do all the violence that thou canst by the sweet attractions of thy charity to my soul and to my rebellious will, that they may leave creatures, to seek for God alone and His Divine will. Show the court of heaven the greatness of thy power. After so many wonders of thy mercy, show this one more: make a poor creature who was far from God wholly His.

Ejac. O Mary, thou canst make me a saint; I hope for this grace from thee!

The usual prayer.

THIRTIETH VISIT.

13:

"Why hidest Thou Thy face?" *Job xlii. 24.*

Job feared when he saw that God hid His face: but to know that Jesus Christ veils His Majesty in the Most Blessed Sacrament should not inspire us with fear, but rather with greater love and confidence; since it is precisely to increase our confidence, and with greater evidence to manifest

His love, that He remains on our altars concealed under the appearance of bread. Novarinus says 'that whilst God hides His face in this Sacrament, He discloses His love.' And who would ever dare approach Him with confidence, and lay bare before Him his affections and desires, did this King of Heaven appear on our altars in the splendour of His glory?

Ah, my Jesus! what loving invention was this of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to hide Thyself under the appearance of bread, in order to make Thyself loved, and that Thou mightest be found on earth by all who desire Thee! The prophet was right in saying that men should speak and raise their voices throughout the world, in order to make known to all men to what an excess the inventions of the love of our good God go for us: "Make His works known among the people" (Is. xxi. 4). O most loving Heart of my Jesus, worthy to possess the hearts of all creatures,—Heart all and ever full of flames of most pure love! O consuming Fire, consume me all, and give me a new life of love and grace! Unite me to Thyself in such a way that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Heart, opened to be the refuge of souls, receive me! O Heart, which on the Cross wast so agonised for the sins of the world, give me true sorrow for my sins! I know that in this Sacrament Thou preservest the same sentiments of love for me which thou hadst for me when dying on Calvary; and therefore Thou hast an ardent desire to unite me wholly to Thyself. And is it possible that I should any longer resist yielding up my entire self to Thy love and to Thy desire? Ah, by Thy merits, my beloved Jesus, be pleased Thyself to wound me, to bind me, to force me, to unite me in all things to Thy Heart. I am now determined by Thy grace to give Thee all the pleasure that I possibly can, by trampling under foot all human respects, inclinations, repugnances, all my tastes and conveniences, which may prevent me from entirely pleasing Thee. Do Thou, my Lord, so help me, that I may execute this determination in such a way, that henceforward all my works, opinions, and affections, may be all in conformity with Thy good pleasure. O Love of God, do Thou drive all

other loves from my heart! O Mary, my hope, thou art all-powerful with God, obtain me the grace to be a faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus until death. Amen, amen. So I hope; so may it be in time and in eternity!

Ejac. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ!

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard affirms, that the love of Mary towards us cannot be greater or more powerful than it is; hence by her affection she is always abundant in her compassion for us, and by her power she is plentiful in the relief she affords us: 'The most powerful and compassionate charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion, and in kind relief: she is equally rich in both.' So that, my most pure Queen, thou art rich in power, and rich in compassion; thou art able to, and desirest to save all. I therefore beseech thee, now and always, in the words of the devout Blossius, saying: 'O Lady! protect me in my combats, and confirm me when I am wavering.' O most holy Mary, in this great battle in which I am now engaged with hell, do thou always help me; but when thou seest me wavering and likely to fall, O my Lady! do thou then extend thy hand with greater promptitude, and sustain me with greater vigour. O God! how many temptations have I still to overcome before my death! Mary, my hope, my refuge, my strength, do thou protect me, and never allow me to lose the grace of God. And on my part, I resolve always and instantly to have recourse to thee in all temptations, saying:

Ejac. Help me, Mary! Mary, help me!

The usual prayer.

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT.

Oh, how beautiful a sight was it to behold our sweet Redeemer on that day when, fatigued by His journey, He

sat down, all engaging and loving, beside the well to await the Samaritan woman, that He might convert and save her! "Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well" (St. John iv. 6). It is precisely thus that this same Lord seems sweetly to dwell with us all the day long, having come down from heaven upon our altars as upon so many fountains of graces, where He awaits and invites souls to keep Him company, at least for a while, that He may thus draw them to His perfect love. From every altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament He seems to speak and address all, saying: O men! why do you fly My presence? Why do you not come and draw near to Me, who love you so much, and who remain thus annihilated for your sakes? Why do you fear? I am not now come on earth to judge; but I have hid Myself in this Sacrament of love only to do good, and to save all who have recourse to Me: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (St. John xii. 47).

Let us, then, understand, that as Jesus Christ in heaven is "always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25), so in the Sacrament of the Altar He is continually, both night and day, exercising the compassionate office of our Advocate; offering Himself as a Victim for us to the Eternal Father, thus to obtain for us His mercies and innumerable graces. Therefore the devout Thomas à Kempis says, that we ought to approach and converse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament without the fear of chastisement, and unrestrained, as to a beloved friend, 'as one who loves speaks to his beloved, as a friend to a friend.'

Since, then, Thou thus givest me permission, let me, O my hidden King and Lord, now open my heart to Thee with confidence, and say: O my Jesus! O enamoured of souls, I well know the injustice that men do Thee. Thou lovest them, and art not beloved by them; Thou doest good, and receivest contempt; Thou desirest to make them hear Thy voice, and they give Thee no ear; Thou offerest them thy graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus! and is it true that I also at one time joined these ungrateful creatures in thus displeasing Thee? O God, it is but too true! But I am determined to amend, and to endeavour, during the

time that I still have to live, to make up for the displeasure which I have caused Thee, by doing all that I possibly can to please Thee and to give Thee pleasure. Tell me, Lord, what Thou askest of me, I will execute all without any reserve : make it known to me by the means of holy obedience, and I hope to do it. My God, I now resolutely promise Thee that I will never, from this day forward, omit any thing which I know to be, rather than another, pleasing to Thee, even were I thereby to lose all, —parents, friends, esteem, health, and even life. Let all perish, provided Thou art pleased : happy is that loss, when all is lost and sacrificed to satisfy Thy Heart, O God of my soul ! I love Thee, O Sovereign Good, worthy of love above every other good ; and in loving Thee I unite my poor heart to all the hearts with which the seraphim love Thee ; I unite it to the heart of Mary, to the Heart of Jesus. I love Thee with my entire self ; Thee alone will I love, and Thee alone will I always love.

Ejac. My God, my God ! I am Thine, and Thou art mine !

Spiritual communion.

VISIT TO MARY.

Blessed Amadeus says, that our most blessed Queen, Mary, is always in the Divine presence, acting as our advocate, and interposing with God by her prayers, which are most powerful : ‘The most blessed Virgin stands before the face of her Creator, interceding with her most powerful prayers for us. For,’ he adds, ‘she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and the most clement and sweet Lady compassionates and succours us with a mother’s love.’ Thou, my Advocate and my most loving Mother, thou even now seest the miseries of my soul ; thou seest my dangers, and prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me saved and thanking thee in heaven. The devout Blossius tells me that thou, O most sweet Mary, art, after Jesus, the certain salvation of those who are thy faithful servants. Ah ! this grace I now ask thee : grant me the happy lot of being thy faithful servant until death ; that after death I may go to bless thee in heaven,

where I shall be certain never more, as long as God is God, to leave thy sacred feet.

Ejac. O Mary, my Mother, grant that I may be ever thine !

The usual prayer.

My Good, my God, all mine Thou art ;
Myself I give Thee, all my heart ;
For Thee, and Thee alone, I sigh.

“What have I in heaven ? and besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth ? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever” (Ps. lxxii. 25, 26).

DEVOUT ACTS

TO BE MADE IN THE VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO
THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

When the visit is publicly made with the congregation, the priest should read these Acts with a loud voice, and sentence by sentence, so that the people may repeat them after him.

RENEW, my soul, thy faith and confidence. Thou art now in the presence of the infinite Majesty of thy God, who was once pleased, for thy love, to come down from heaven and become Man on earth, and to die on a cross to save thee; and is now in the Most Blessed Sacrament, all love, to listen to and grant thee those graces which thou askest of Him. Speak to Him, then, and say:

ACT OF FAITH AND ADORATION.

My God, I believe all that the Holy Church teaches me to believe, because Thou, who art infallible truth, hast revealed it. I believe that Thou art the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, who eternally rewardest the just in paradise, and chastisest sinners in hell. I believe that Thou art one God in essence, but three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe, O Eternal Son of God, that Thou didst take flesh, and didst become Man in the womb of Mary, and that Thou didst die on a cross for our salvation, and that Thou art now present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to feed us with Thy most Sacred Flesh in the Holy Communion, and to hear and grant our prayers when we come to visit Thee on the altar. Prostrate, then, at Thy feet, I, a miserable sinner, unworthy to appear before Thee, only fit for hell, which I have so often deserved, adore Thee, O Infinite Majesty, and unite my adoration to that which all the Angels and Saints of heaven, together with the most holy Virgin Mary, now offer Thee.

ACT OF HOPE.

My dear Redeemer, relying on Thy promises, and because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope, through the merits of Thy Passion, for the forgiveness of my sins, perseverance until death in Thy grace; and at length I hope, by Thy mercy, to see Thee and love Thee eternally in heaven.

ACT OF LOVE.

My own dear God, because Thou art an infinite good, and worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things; and I desire to see Thee loved by all men on earth as much as Thou deservest. I rejoice that Thou art and wilt be infinitely happy for all eternity.

ACT OF CONTRITION, AND PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

My beloved Redeemer, had I for Thy sake abandoned all, had I spent my entire life in a desert, and at length died of torments endured for love of Thee, it would still have been nothing, when compared with the cruel death which Thou, my God, wast pleased to endure for love of me. But what has my conduct towards Thee been hitherto? I have paid Thee with ingratitude; instead of loving Thee, I have so often offended Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee, and ungratefully despised Thy grace and Thy love. I am sorry, my Jesus, and from the bottom of my heart am grieved for having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! Oh, that I had rather died, and thus never displeased Thee! I hate and detest above every evil all the injuries which I have committed against Thee. My Lord, I promise Thee, and now determine rather to die than ever more to offend Thee; I also determine to receive the holy Sacraments during my life, and at my death. I am resolved, O Infinite Majesty, to spend the whole remainder of my life, be it long or short, in loving Thee, my only good, who art amiable above every other good. But, O God of my soul, what will be the use of all my promises, if Thou dost not help me? Without Thy aid I shall again

betray Thee worse than ever. I ask Thee, then, for this grace, and I hope for it through the merits of Thy Passion ; give me holy perseverance, and never again permit me to separate myself from Thee. Grant that I may rather die than again have the misfortune to incur Thy displeasure.

ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

My Jesus, I thank Thee for all the graces which Thou hast granted me ; for having created me, for having redeemed me with Thy precious Blood, and for having made me a Christian by the Sacrament of Baptism ; for having borne with me for so long a time when I was at enmity with Thee. Unfortunate, indeed, would my lot have been, had I then died ; I should now have been in hell ; there, O my God, I should now be for ever lost, and unable to love Thee. I thank Thee, then, for having awaited me with so much patience, and for having (as I trust) pardoned me with so much mercy. I thank Thee especially for dwelling in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and for having given me Thy entire Self as my Food so many times in the Holy Communion, and for now admitting me to Thy Presence. I thank Thee for all ; and I hope to thank Thee in a still more becoming manner for all eternity in heaven, where I hope to sing Thy mercies for ever.

OFFERING.

My Jesus, for love of me Thou wast pleased to die a shameful and cruel death on an infamous gibbet ; what return can I make to Thee for so great love ? I can make no other than the offering of my entire self. Yes, my Lord, I offer and consecrate my whole self to Thee. I give Thee my soul, my body, and my will, resigning myself in all and for ever to Thy most holy will. Do with me what Thou pleasest. Make me ever love Thee in this life and in the next ; do this, and then dispose of me and of every thing I have as Thou wilt. Tell me what Thou askest of me ; for with Thy grace I will execute it, be it what it may.

PRAYER.

I recommend to Thee, O Lord, the Sovereign Pontiff, and all bishops and priests ; grant them the spirit of their state, so that they may sanctify the world. I recommend to Thee infidels, heretics, and all sinners ; grant them light and strength to renounce sin, that they may live only to love Thee, the Sovereign Good. I recommend to Thee all who are in their last agony, my relations, benefactors, and friends. I also recommend my enemies to Thee in an especial manner, because such is Thy command : make them happy and saints. I recommend the holy souls in purgatory to Thee ; relieve them in their sufferings, and shorten the time of their exile, that they may soon go to enjoy Thee in heaven.

And now, O Jesus, hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament, I pray to Thee for myself ; from the throne of love on which Thou art on this altar, grant me by Thy merits great sorrow for my sins, and the forgiveness of all the offences which I have committed against Thee. Grant me holy humility and meekness, that I may bear all insults and persecutions with patience. Grant me the grace to mortify myself in all which is displeasing to Thee. Grant me perfect resignation to Thy holy will, so that I may with interior peace embrace all crosses which come to me from Thy hands. Grant me light to know, and strength to execute Thy holy will. Grant me great confidence in Thy most holy Passion, and in the patronage of Thy most holy Mother Mary. Grant me the supreme gift of Thy holy love, together with a great desire to love and please Thee ; so that from henceforward I may always repeat the words which I now address to Thee, ' My God, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more.' Grant me perseverance until death in Thy love, so that I may never again have the misfortune to lose Thy holy grace. Above all, I beseech Thee to help me always to seek for this holy perseverance from Thee, by always recommending myself to Thee and to Thy holy Mother, more especially when I am tempted to offend Thee, saying, ' Jesus and Mary, Jesus and Mary,

help me!⁷ Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Thy Son, grant me all these graces.

[SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart, and I wish to live always united to Thee. As I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I receive Thee in spirit. Come, then, into my soul; I embrace Thee, and I unite my entire self to Thee; and I beseech Thee never more to allow me to be separated from Thee.

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin can now be recited, and followed by the hymn Pango lingua.

Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory,
Of His flesh the mystery sing;
Of the Blood, all price exceeding,
Shed by our Immortal King,
Destin'd, for the world's redemption,
From a noble womb to spring,
Down in adoration fall'ng,
Lo, the Sacred Host we hail;
Lo, o'er ancient forms departing
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying,
Where the feeble senses fail.

V. Thou gavest them bread from heaven.

R. Containing in itself every delight.

Let us pray.

O God, who, under a wonderful Sacrament, hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion; grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever feel within us the fruit of Thy redemption, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

VISIT TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

O great Queen of heaven, most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, I, a miserable sinner, salute and worship thee as the Mother of my God. Thou, of all creatures, art the most beautiful, the most holy, the most amiable, and the most beloved of God; I love thee, my Lady, and, after God, I love thee above every other thing, and I should like to see thee loved by all. In the highest degree I rejoice at thy

greatness, and I thank our Lord who has exalted thee so much. I also thank thee, my Mother, for the many graces which thou hast obtained for me from God during the whole course of my life. I devote myself to thee for thy perpetual servant, and I place myself under thy mantle. In thee do I place my hopes. Accept me, my Queen, and reject me not, as I deserve. I know that thou art so powerful with God, that He refuses thee nothing that thou askest Him. O Mother of mercy, O Refuge of sinners, I place my soul in thy hands; do thou pity me! Recommend me to thy Son, and obtain me pardon for all my sins, the love of God, and holy perseverance, that so I may live and die in His grace. Above all, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace ever to recommend myself to thee, and especially whenever I am tempted to offend God. Help me always, in life and in death. My Mother, to thee do I trust. The merits of Jesus thy Son, and thou, by thy intercession, have to save me. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

St. Francis of Sales says, that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender, in all that He has done for us, than in the Holy Communion, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself and becomes food, that He may unite Himself to the hearts and bodies of His faithful. Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say, that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

And, indeed, if we speak of doing something agreeable to God, what can a soul do more agreeable to Him than to receive Communion? St. Denis teaches us that love always tends towards perfect union; but how can a soul be more perfectly united with Jesus than in the manner of which He speaks Himself, saying: "He that eateth My

flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 57). St. Augustine says, that if every day you receive this Sacrament, Jesus will be always with you, and that you will always advance in Divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the sacred Council of Trent 'a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins.'

Whence does it come, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so many souls we see so little fruit with such frequent Communions, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: 'The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who receives.' "Can a man," says Solomon, "hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?" (Prov. vi. 27.) "God is a consuming fire." He comes Himself in the Holy Communion to enkindle this Divine fire; how is it, then, says William of Paris, that we see such a diabolical miracle as that souls should remain cold in Divine Love in the midst of such flames?

All comes from the want of proper dispositions, and especially from want of preparation. Fire immediately inflames dry but not green wood; for this latter is not disposed to burn. The Saints derived great benefit from their Communions, because they prepared themselves with very great care. St. Aloysius Gonzaga devoted three days to his preparation for Holy Communion, and three days he spent in thanksgiving to his Lord.

To prepare well for Holy Communion, a soul should be disposed on two main points: it should be detached from creatures, and have a great desire to advance in Divine Love.

In the first place, then, a soul should detach itself from all things, and drive every thing from its heart which is not God. "He that is washed," saith Jesus, "needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly" (St. John xiii. 10); which signifies, as St. Bernard explains it, that in order to receive this Sacrament with great fruit, we should not only be cleansed from mortal sins, but that our feet also should be washed, that is, free from earthly affections; for being in contact with the earth, they excite a sort of re-

pugnance in God, and soiling the soul, prevent the effects of the Holy Communion.

St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparation He required of her for the Holy Communion; and He replied: 'I only ask that thou shouldst come empty of thyself, to receive Me.'

In the second place, it is necessary, in the Holy Communion, to have a great desire to receive Jesus Christ and His holy love. In this sacred banquet, says Gerson, only those who are famishing receive their fill; and the most blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing: "He hath filled the hungry with good things" (St. Luke i. 53). As Jesus, writes the Venerable Father Avila, only came into this world after He had been much and long desired, so does He only enter a soul which desires Him; for it is not becoming that such food should be given to Him who has a loathing for it. Our Lord one day said to St. Matilda: 'No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of My love.' Since, then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive Him and His Divine Love by the Holy Communion. St. Francis of Sales teaches us, that the principal object which a soul should have in view in communicating should be, to advance in the love of God; since He who, for love alone, gives Himself to us, should be received for love.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION

I. *Acts of Faith*.—"Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" (Cant. ii. 8). Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by the means of this Most Holy Sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become Man; from being immense, to become a babe; from being Lord, to become a servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet

of a criminal. And on this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven to dwell in my bosom.

"Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices" (Cant. ii. 9). Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which He loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what doing? "Looking through the lattices." As an ardent lover, desirous to see his love corresponded with, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence He sees without being seen, He is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon His Divine Flesh; He observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make Him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to Him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself all to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

II. *Act of Confidence.*—My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, who, urged by love, comes all love to thee. Yes, my dear Jesus, my Hope, I trust in Thy goodness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee; so that, from this day forward, I may never will any thing but what Thou wilt.

III. *Act of Love.*—Ah, my God, my God, true and only Love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord; Thou wast pleased to institute this

great Sacrament in order to give Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so! O boundless love! incomprehensible love! infinite love! a God would give Himself all to me!

My soul, believest thou this? And what dost thou? what sayest thou? O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all loves, I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, more than my life! Oh, could I but see Thee loved by all! Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the hearts of the Seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O Infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the Saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus love Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all earthly affections, which are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God whom Thou dost so ardently desire to see loved!

IV. *Act of Humility.*—Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred Flesh of Jesus! And art thou worthy? My God, and who am I, and who art Thou? I indeed know and confess whom Thou art who givest Thyself to me; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee?

And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I have re-

course? and what will become of me? No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee. Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

V. *Act of Contrition.*—I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back against Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship; in fine, O my God, I was deliberately in the will to lose Thee. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy Blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

VI. *Act of Desire.*—And now, my soul, the blessed hour is arrived in which Jesus will come and take up His dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive Him with love, invite Him with the ardour of thy desire; come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, which desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it.

Come, my God! hasten; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my Treasure, my Life, my Paradise, my Love, my All, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee; with that with which the most blessed Virgin

Mary received Thee; with their communions I unite this one of mine.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give Him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive Him from thy most pure hands. Tell Him that I am thy servant and thy client; for He will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and, now that He is coming, will press me more closely to Himself.

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the thanksgiving after Communion. It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Gaetano, Valenza, De Lugo, and others), that the Holy Communion, so long as the sacramental species lasts, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue. The Council of Florence, in the decree of Eugenius IV. to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food, which, when it enters the body, takes effect according to the state in which it finds it.

For this reason, holy souls endeavour to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Venerable Father Avila, even when he was giving his missions, used to remain for at least two hours in prayer. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say, that we should make great account of the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words which He addressed to His disciples: "But Me you have not always with you."

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion: it is then better to spend at least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus, who is then within us, and in repeat-

ing many times words of tenderness, or some feeling prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer in the garden three times: "And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word" (St. Matt. xxvi. 44). In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know, that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know, that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says, that after Communion Jesus places Himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says: "What wilt thou that I should do for thee?" meaning. O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces; ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half an hour, after Communion! For this purpose you can read the following acts. Be also careful after your prayer is ended to keep yourself during the whole day on which you have communicated united by affections and prayers with Jesus, whom you have received.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

I. *Act of Faith*.—Behold, my God is even now come to visit me; my Saviour to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is even now within me. He is come to make Himself mine, and at the same time to make me His. So that Jesus is mine, and I belong to Jesus: Jesus is all mine, and I am all His.

O Infinite Goodness! O Infinite Mercy! O Infinite Love! that a God should come to unite Himself to me, and to make Himself all mine! My soul, now that thou art thus closely bound to Jesus, that thou art thus one with Him, what dost thou? Hast thou nothing to say to Him; dost thou not converse with thy God, who is

with thee? Ah, yes, renew thy faith; remember that the angels now surround thee adoring their God, who is within thy breast; do thou also adore thy Lord within thyself. Enter into thyself, and banish thence every other thought. Unite all thy affections together, and, clinging closely to thy God, say:

II. *An Act of Welcome*.—Ah, my Jesus, my Love, my Infinite Good, my All, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul! Ah, my Lord, where art Thou! to what a place art Thou come! Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born; it is full of earthly affections, of self-love, and of inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there? I would address Thee with St. Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (St. Luke v. 8). Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness; go and find repose in those pure souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer; what do I say? Leave me not; for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my Life; I cling to Thee. Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my Treasure; I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most blessed Virgin Mary, Seraphim, and all souls, do you who love God with pure love lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

III. *Act of Thanksgiving*.—My God and Lord, I thank Thee for the grace which Thou hast this morning bestowed upon me, of coming to dwell in my soul; but I would wish to thank Thee in a manner worthy of Thee and of the great favour which Thou hast done me. But what do I say? how can such a miserable creature as I am ever worthily thank Thee?

Father Segneri says, that the feeling most becoming a soul who communicates is that of wondering astonishment

at the thought, and to repeat: 'A God is united to me; a God is mine!' David said: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?" (Ps. cxv. 12.) But I! what return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, who, after having given me so many of Thy good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless, then, and thank thy God as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my guardian-angel, and all ye souls who love God, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxxv. 16). Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which He has granted me.

IV. *Act of Oblation*.—"My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16). Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what can the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my Divine King, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may only serve me to please Thee. And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found, than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God? I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will only use to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy love; my understanding I will only use to think of Thee, who always thinkest of my good; my will I will only use to love Thee, my God, my All, and to will only that which Thou wilt. My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning all that I am and have,—my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, my liberty, in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

Accept, O Infinite Majesty, the sacrifice of the hitherto

most ungrateful sinner Thou hast ever had on earth; but who now offers and gives himself all to Thee. Do with me and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou pleasest.

Come, O consuming Fire, O Divine Love! and consume in me all which is mine, and which is displeasing in Thy most pure eyes, so that from henceforward I may be all Thine, and may live only to execute, not Thy commands and counsels alone, but all Thy holy desires and good pleasure also. Amen.

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity with thine own hands; and do thou obtain Their acceptance of it, and that They may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, amen, amen.

V. *Act of Petition*.—"O my soul, what art thou doing? The present is no time to be lost: it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive all the graces which thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, who is lovingly beholding thee? for within thee He sees His beloved Son, the dearest object of His love. Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts; rekindle thy faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou wilt.

Hearst thou not Jesus Himself who thus addresses thee: "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" (St. Mark x. 51.) O soul, tell me, what dost thou desire of Me? I am come for the express purpose of enriching and gratifying thee; ask with confidence, and thou wilt receive all.

Ah! my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth—riches, honours, or pleasures; but grant me, I beseech Thee, intense sorrow for the displeasures I have caused Thee; impart to me so clear a light, that I may know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only for that which is more pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire

than Thy holy love : " Create a clean heart in me, O God" (Ps. l. 12).

I deserve not this ; but Thou, my Jesus, deservest it, since Thou art come to dwell in my soul : I ask it of Thee through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother, and by the love which Thou bearest to Thy Eternal Father.

Here pause, to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbours. Do not forget poor sinners, or the souls in Purgatory ; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good.

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ Himself, Thy Son, has said, " Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My Name, He will give it you." For the love, then, of this Son, whom I now hold within my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

My most sweet Loves, Jesus and Mary, may I suffer for you, may I die for you ; may I be all yours, and in nothing my own ! May the Most Blessed Sacrament ever be thanked and praised ! Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary !

There is an indulgence attached to the following prayer :

Soul of Christ, sanctify me ;
Body of Christ, protect me ;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me ;
Water of the Side of Christ, purify me ;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear Thou me ;
Within Thy wounds, oh, hide me ;
Suffer me not to leave Thee ;
From the evil one defend me ;
In my last hour call Thou me ;
Bid me, oh, bid me, come to Thee ;
With saints and angels may I praise Thee,
Through endless ages of eternity.

Amen.

LOVING ASPIRATIONS

TO

JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

They can be used either before or after Communion, or in visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

I. " Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" (Cant. iii. 11). O daughters of grace, O ye souls who love God, quit the darkness of earth, and behold Jesus, your King, crowned with a crown of thorns ; the crown of contempt and suffering with which the impious synagogue, His mother, crowned Him on the day of His espousals,—that is to say, on the day of His death, by the means of which He espoused Himself on the Cross to our souls. Go forth again, and behold Him all full of compassion and love, now that He comes to unite Himself to Thee in this Sacrament of love.

Has it indeed, then, cost Thee so much, my beloved Jesus, before Thou couldst come and unite Thyself to souls in this most sweet Sacrament ? Wert Thou indeed obliged to suffer so bitter and ignominious a death ? Oh, come, then, without delay, and unite Thyself to my soul also. It was at one time Thy enemy by sin ; but now Thou desirest to espouse it by Thy grace. Come, O Jesus, my Spouse, for never more will I betray Thee ; I am determined to be ever faithful to Thee. As a loving spouse, my whole thought shall be to find out Thy pleasure. I am determined to love Thee without reserve ; I desire to be all Thine, my Jesus,—all, all, all.

II. " A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me ; He shall abide between my breasts" (Cant. i. 12). The myrrh plant,

when pricked, sends forth tears, and a healthful liquor from the wounds. Before His Passion, our Jesus determined to pour forth His Divine Blood from His wounds in so painful a way, to give it afterwards all to us for our salvation in this Bread of Life. Come, then, O my beloved Bundle of Myrrh, O my enamoured Jesus; Thou art indeed a subject of grief and pity to me when I consider Thee all wounded for me on the Cross: but then, when I receive Thee in this most sweet Sacrament, Thou becomest, indeed, to me more sweet and delicious than a bunch of the choicest grapes can be to one who is parched with thirst: "A cluster of cyprus my Love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi" (Cant. i. 13). Come, then, to my soul, and revive and satiate me with Thy holy love. Ah, what sweetness do I feel in my soul at the thought, that I have to receive within myself that same Saviour of mine who for my salvation was pleased to be drained of all His Blood, and sacrificed on a cross! "He shall abide between my breasts." No, my Jesus, never more will I drive Thee hence; and Thou shalt never more have to leave me. I am determined ever to love Thee, and to be always united to and closely bound up with Thee. I will always belong to Jesus, and Jesus will be always mine: for ever, for ever, for ever "He shall abide between my breasts."

III. "While the King was at His repose my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof" (Cant. i. 11). When Jesus comes to dwell in a soul in the Holy Communion, oh, how clearly does she see and know her own nothingness by the bright light which the King of Heaven brings with Him! As the spikenard is the most lowly amongst plants, so does the soul confess itself the most vile of all creatures; and when thus humbled, oh, how sweet is the odour which she breathes forth to her beloved King! and for this reason He invites her to unite herself to Him in closer and closer bonds.

If, then, my soul, thou desirest that thy Jesus should repose in thee, consider thy own nothingness. Who art thou? what dost thou deserve? Humble thyself as thou shouldst do, by casting away from thyself all self-esteem

which may keep Jesus at a distance from thee, or prevent His coming to repose in thee. Come to me, my dear Redeemer, come; and by Thy Divine light make me to see my own lowliness, my misery, my nothingness, that Thou mayest be enabled to repose in me with satisfaction to Thyself, to separate Thyself no more from me.

IV. "Think of the Lord in goodness" (Wisd. i. 1). My soul, why art thou so timid and fearful at the sight of the goodness and infinite love of Thy Lord? why such distrust? Now that thou art made worthy to receive within thee Jesus Christ, let thy sentiments correspond to this grace, by confiding in that goodness of God, who gives Thee all Himself. Truly His judgments are terrible, but they are terrible only to the proud and to the obstinate; but to the humble and penitent, who desire to love and please Him, His judgments are all mercy and love, emanating from a Heart full of compassion and kindness. So that David, considering these judgments of God, superabounds with hope: "I have more than hoped in Thy judgments" (Ps. cxviii. 43). These judgments made him happy and consoled him: "Thy judgments are delightful" (ib. 39): "I remembered Thy judgments, and was comforted" (ib. 52).

Ah! our great God is only too loving and generous to those who seek Him with love: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25). How good is God to those who seek to unite their will with the Divine Will: "How good is God to Israel, to those that are of a right heart" (Ps. lxxii. 1). My God, my Love, my Hope, my All, I desire Thee, and Thee alone,—to love Thee, to please Thee, and to do Thy will in all things. Let me always find Thee; make me agreeable to Thee; and never let me leave Thee again. So be it. Amen, amen.

V. "The voice of my Beloved knocking: Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled" (Cant. v. 2). Such are the words which Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament speaks to those who love and desire Him. Open to Me, he says, O soul, thy heart, and there I will come to unite

Myself to thee ; so that, being one with Me, thou mayest become My sister by resemblance, My friend by participation in My riches, My dove by the gift of simplicity, My undefiled by the gift of purity, which I shall communicate to thee.

And then He goes on to say, Open to Me, "for My head is full of dew, and My locks of the drops of the night" (ib.). As if He said : Consider, My beloved, that I have waited for thee all the night of the bad life thou hast led in the midst of darkness and error. Behold now, instead of bringing scourges to chastise thee, I come in the Blessed Sacrament, with My hair full of heavenly dew, to extinguish in thee all impure desires towards creatures, and to kindle in Thee the happy fire of My love. Come, then, O my beloved Jesus, and work in me what Thou wilt. I renounce the love of all things, in order to be all Thine, and that Thou mayest make me as Thou wouldst have me, entirely united to Thy will.

VI. "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees" (Cant. v. 1). Cornelius à Lapide says, that this is precisely the invitation that a soul desirous of the Holy Communion makes to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Come, my Beloved, she says, into my poor heart, which at one unhappy time did not belong to Thee; but which now, by the help of Thy grace, has returned to Thee : "Come and eat the fruit of Thy apple-trees." Come and taste in me those virtues which Thou dost bring with Thyself when Thou comest to me. O my Lord, at least for the honour of Thy majesty, purify my heart, adorn it, inflame it with Thy love, and make it beautiful in Thy sight, that it may be a worthy dwelling-place for Thee.

VII. "You shall be carried at the breasts" (Is. lxvi. 12). It is thus that Jesus from the sacred altars invites our souls. Come, He says, and suck My Divine milk, which I give you in this Sacrament, wherein I offer you My own Blood to drink. But what shepherd, says St. John Chrysostom, ever feeds his sheep with his own blood? Even mothers

give their children to nurses to be fed. But Thou, O Divine Pastor, art so enamoured of our souls as to wish to nourish them with Thine own Blood. St. Catharine of Sienna, then, did well in approaching the Holy Communion as if panting to suck the Divine milk, in the same way as an infant presses anxiously to suck the milk from its mother's breast. And well might the Sacred Spouse say to her Beloved, "Thy breasts are better than wine" (Cant. i. 1) ; signifying that she esteemed the milk of this Sacrament, as the sacred interpreters explain it, above all the pleasures of the world, which are transitory and vain, as are transitory and vain also the joys and pleasures of wine. O my beloved Jesus, since Thou wilt feed me this morning with Thine own Blood in the Holy Communion, it is but reasonable that I should willingly renounce all the delights and pleasures which the world might give me. Yes, I give them all up ; I protest that I choose rather to suffer all evils united to Thee, than to enjoy all the goods of the world away from Thee. It is sufficient happiness for me to please Thee, who art worthy of all that we can do to please Thee. I will say, then, with St. Ignatius of Loyola, give me, I pray Thee, but Thy love and Thy grace ; that is sufficient for me, and I am contented.

VIII. "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved" (Cant. v. 1). The "friends," that is beginners, who scarcely enjoy the Divine friendship, when they receive the Holy Communion, feed indeed on the flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat with labour ; while those who are on the way to perfection eat with less difficulty. But by the "dearly beloved" are meant the perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, live almost out of the world, forgetting all things, even themselves, and think only how they may love and please their God. My beloved Jesus, I am not yet perfect ; but Thou canst make me perfect. I am not dear to Thee, and it is my own fault, because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful ; but Thou canst make me become so, by inebriating me this morning with Thy love. "Thy kingdom come." Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish

Thy kingdom in me; so that Thou alone mayest reign in me, that Thy love alone may command me, and that Thy love only may I obey. Inebriate me, inebriate me entirely; make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all, that I may love nothing but Thee, my God, my Treasure, all my Good, my All; may I sigh for Thee alone, seek Thee alone, think of Thee alone, and please Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion. This only do I ask of Thee; this I hope.

IX. "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love" (Cant. ii. 5). The languor of the soul is when, forgetful of herself and her affairs, she thinks only of seeking refreshment for her languishing love by holy desires, which are the flowers, and by good works, which are the fruits, of Divine love.

O my God, O Blessed Sacrament, since Thou wilt have me to be all Thine, make me what Thou wouldst have me. Make me forget every thing that does not belong to Thy love. Increase in me always more and more the desire of pleasing Thee. Grant that these flowers may not always remain flowers; make them also become fruits, by my doing and suffering something for Thee, who hast done and suffered only too much for me. O God, O God of my soul, make Thyself loved, but really loved, by me,—not only in word, but in deed,—before death comes upon me.

X. "My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands" (Cant. v. 10). Our beloved Jesus is all white by His purity, and all red by the flames of His Divine love. My spotless Lamb, all burning with love for me, when shall I make myself like to Thee, pure as Thou art, O lily; burning with love of Thee as Thou dost burn with love of me? Yes, I do renounce all other love, and choose for myself Thy sweet love, my God, my All. Begone, ye creatures! what do you want with me? Go and enjoy the love of those who seek you. I wish only for my God; for God alone will I keep all my heart and all my affections.

XI. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour

appeared" (Tit. iii. 4). St. Paul says, that God, by making Himself man, showed the world how far His goodness towards us went. But by giving Himself in this Sacrament, He makes us know the depth of the tenderness of His love towards our souls. 'Does it not seem madness to say, Eat my flesh, and drink my blood?' St. Augustine says, does it not seem a madness, Jesus Christ saying to us, as He said in that blessed night, "Take and eat, this is My Body?" O men, He says, to make you understand how much I love you, I will that you should come and feed on My very flesh. O holy faith! And who among us would have been able to demand so much? Who could have even thought of it, if Jesus had not thought it and done it? Some of the followers of Jesus Christ, when they heard that from His mouth, that is, that He wished to give them His Body to eat, said that this was too hard a thing, and that they could neither believe nor hear it: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (St. John vi. 61.) And they went so far as to leave Him, because they would not believe it: but yet it is of faith that so it is.

But what else does Jesus Christ ask of us, by all this He has done for us, but that we should love Him? as the Lord had once before instructed His people: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou love Him and serve Him with all thy heart?"

O my most loving Jesus, what dost Thou not give, what dost Thou not promise to those that love Thee? Thou dost promise them Thy love: "I love those that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). Thou dost promise them Thy caresses, even when they have already turned their backs upon Thee: "Turn ye to Me, and I will turn to you" (Zach. i. 3). Thou dost promise to come with the Father and the Holy Spirit to abide for ever in their souls: "He who loveth Me shall be loved of My Father . . . and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (St. John xiv. 21-23).

And what more hast Thou to promise and to give, to entice men to love Thee? My dearest Lord, I see how it is; Thou dost wish also to be loved by me: yes, I love Thee

with all my heart; and if I do not love Thee, do Thou teach me to love Thee; make me to love Thee, and to love Thee above all things: 'Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.'

XII. "Do not consider me, that I am brown; for the sun has discoloured me" (Cant. i. 5). The heat of my passions, said the Sacred Spouse (and still more ought I to say it, O my dear Jesus), has deformed and blackened me: "I am black, but beautiful" (Cant. i. 4). But I am black by my own works; I am beautiful by Thy merits, O my Redeemer. I was black at one time, when I was alone and separated from Thee; but now that I am united to Thee, Thy grace, Thy beauty, Thy love has made me beautiful. Yes, my Jesus, so do I hope. Mayest Thou be blessed for ever. Never permit me to lose Thee again, and to return to my former depravity. I love Thee, O Infinite Beauty; I wish also that my soul should be beautiful, always beautiful, that it may be always pleasing in Thy Divine sight, and that Thou mayest always love it.

XIII. "Draw me: we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments" (Cant. i. 3). Since, then, O my dear Jesus, I cannot, while in this life, ascend to Thee, Thou hast willed to descend to me, to unite Thyself to me in this Sacrament of love. Draw me, my Lord, all to Thee. I do not wish to draw Thee to me, that Thou shouldst do my pleasure; but I desire that Thou shouldst draw me so entirely to Thee by Thy sweet attractions, that I may not be able to desire or do any thing else but Thy most holy will. It is just that my inclinations should yield to Thy disposition. Take me up wholly to Thyself; and so united, I shall be free from earthly affections, and shall run with Thee in the path of virtue, and be able to repose peacefully in Thy Divine will both in this life and in the next: "In peace, in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest" (Ps. iv. 9).

XIV. "The King brought me into the cellar of wine, and set in order charity in me" (Cant. ii. 4). It is pre-

cisely by this cellar of wine that St. Bonaventure understands the Holy Communion, which introduces and then unites the soul to its Divine King, and gives it to taste that wine of love which destroys the desire of created things; infuses a well-regulated love, that is just towards itself, charitable towards its neighbour, supreme towards God, loving Him above all things, who above all things deserves to be loved.

O Jesus, my King, only Lord of my heart, Thou hast already brought me into the beautiful cellar of Thy love, that is, into Thyself, uniting me to Thee by means of this Sacrament of love. Yes, my Lord, I already feel my heart changed. I feel a holy desire, which gives me peace, and makes me loathe all impure affections, and enkindles in me the pure love of Thee. O my Jesus, since Thou hast given me an entrance to this beautiful cellar, let me no more depart from it. Since Thou hast united Thyself to me, do not leave me again. Detach me from the love of all creatures. Unite me to Thee continually more and more on this earth, that I may one day come to be perfectly united to Thee in heaven; where I shall love Thee face to face with all my strength, without interruption and without imperfection throughout all eternity.

XV. "My Beloved is gone down into His garden . . . to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies" (Cant. vi. 1). My sweet Saviour, since Thou dost descend from heaven to come into my soul, by Thy grace do Thou make it become Thy garden, that Thou mayest gather in it lilies and fruits which are agreeable to Thee. Pardon me, if I have offended Thee. Receive me, if I have left Thee, now that I return penitent to Thee. Give me that purity which Thou dost desire to see in me. Give me strength to do what Thou desirest. Grant me Thy true love, and then shall I become pleasing to Thee. I sacrifice to Thee all my inclinations, and I desire and wish for nothing but to please Thee.

XVI. The Sacred Spouse called her Beloved "altogether desirable." Jesus, to those souls who love Him as

spouses, makes Himself altogether desirable, whether He chastises or consoles them, whether He appears near or distant, because He does it all for love, and that He may be loved. Treat me, then, O my Jesus, as Thou wilt, I will always love Thee; whether Thou dost give me sweetness or tribulations, I know that all will come to me from Thy loving Heart, and that all will be for my greater good. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." Behold my will is ready, O Lord, to accept all that Thou shalt ordain. "I will bless the Lord at all times." At all times, whether prosperous or adverse, I will bless Thee and love Thee, O my Creator. I neither seek nor merit any consolation from Thee; for I have given Thee nothing but bitterness by my sins: I seek only Thy good pleasure. Provided Thou art satisfied, I shall be content with any punishment. My Jesus, my Jesus, whether far off or near, Thou shalt always be desirable to me, always dear: whether Thou dost console or afflict me, I will always love Thee, always thank Thee.

XVII. "Who is this that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?" (Cant. viii. 5.) Who, then, are those souls who, living on the earth, esteem it a desert? so that, detached from visible things, they live only to God; as if there was no one else but God, whom alone they love and desire to please. And in this way they almost go out of the world, and raise themselves above it; enjoying the delights which are experienced by those who wish for God alone, and who place in God all their hopes.

Who, then, are these faithful souls, if not those who often and with pure love unite themselves to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Yes, my God, such do I also desire to be by the means of Thy grace, detached from all things, and to be all Thine. From henceforth the world shall be to me a desert, where, flying from all attachment to creatures, I will think of nothing but Thee; as if Thou and I were the only persons there. In Thee alone will I put all my confidence, all my love, O God, O beloved God, my Hope, my Love, my All.

XVIII. "If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks of silver; if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar" (Cant. viii. 9). This is precisely what Jesus does when He comes to a soul in the Holy Communion. He sees that she is a wall too weak to be able to resist the assaults of hell; therefore, by the virtue of the Sacrament, He fortifies her with bulwarks of silver, that is, with His Divine light. He sees that she is a door inclined easily to be corrupted, and He renews it, adjusting her with planks of strength and perseverance, as is signified by cedar, which is a strong and incorruptible wood; that is, with the gifts of holy fear, with detachment from creatures, with the love of prayer, with supplications, with holy desires, and still more with the gift of Divine love, which are the support of holy perseverance: "Bread strengthens man's heart." Jesus teaches us, that as earthly bread preserves the life of the body, so the heavenly bread of the Holy Communion preserves the life of the soul: "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him." Such are the gracious promises which Jesus makes to him who receives Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Ah, my Jesus! who is weaker and more unfaithful than I? Thou knowest well how many times I have yielded to my enemies, and how many times they have seized the gate, that is my will, by which they have entered to ruin me by causing me to lose Thy friendship. Oh, fortify me with Thy light and strength, that I may no more lose Thee or drive Thee from me! My Lord and my dear Redeemer, if I am to turn back and offend Thee again, oh, let me die now, while I hope that I am in Thy grace and united to Thee! I trust not myself, no; nor will I ever, my dear Jesus, live without Thee. But as long as I live, I am in danger of changing my will and betraying Thee, as I have done before: do Thou help me. Help me also, most holy Mary; have pity on me: thou who art the Mother of perseverance, obtain for me this gift from thy Jesus. Of thee I seek it, of thee I hope it, of thee I ask it.

XIX. "I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him,

and I will not let Him go" (Cant. iii. 4). So ought every soul to say who is united with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Creatures, depart from me; go out altogether from my heart. I loved you once, because I was blind; now I love you not, nor can I ever love you again. I have found another good, infinitely more delightful than you; I have found in myself my Jesus, who has enamoured me by His beauty; to this love I have given myself entirely. He has already accepted me, so that I am no longer my own. Creatures, farewell: I am not, nor shall I ever again be yours; but I am and shall be always Christ's. He, too, is mine, and will always be mine: "I held Him, and I will not let Him go." Now I have pressed Him to my heart, receiving Him in the Holy Communion; for the future I will hold Him with my love, and will not let Him leave me any more.

Permit me, sweet Saviour, to embrace Thee so closely, that I may never more be separated from Thee. Behold, I press Thee to myself, my Jesus; I love Thee, I love Thee; and, oh, that I could love Thee worthily. I wish that my only happiness and repose should be to love Thee and please Thee. Do thou command all creatures to leave me, and not to disturb me; say to them, 'I adjure you, do not arouse or waken My love.' Ah, if I do not wish it, creatures cannot enter in to disturb and divide me from Thee. Strengthen, then, my will, unite my miserable heart to Thy Divine Heart, that it may always will what Thou wilt. Do this, Lord, by Thy merits. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be.

XX. "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow" (Cant. iv. 16). Fly from me, O north wind! hurtful and cold wind of earthly affections; and come, thou soft warm breeze of the sacred love of the Holy Spirit, which comes from the Heart of my Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Do thou alone breathe through my soul, which has been chosen by Jesus for His garden of delights. Blow; for by thy breath how many fresh and sweet odours of holy virtues shalt thou draw forth from me! My Jesus,

my Jesus, Thou canst do this; and this do I hope from Thee.

XXI. "I have gathered my myrrh, with my aromatical spices" (Cant. v. 1). A soul which has received Jesus must be careful to gather myrrh, that it may always offer the sweet odour of those virtues which arise from mortification. "I have eaten honeycomb with my honey" (ib.). In like manner, the soul that loves God alone is not satisfied with the honey, but will also have the honeycomb; therefore she says to Jesus: 'O Lord, Thy consolations are not sufficient for me, unless Thou givest me Thyself, who art the fountain of consolation; the fruits of love are not enough for me, if Thou dost not give me also Thyself, who art the object of my love. Truly Thou alone wilt suffice for me; I am ready to renounce all Thy delights, provided I possess Thee alone, my God, and my only good. I love Thee, not to please myself, but to please Thee; for Thou dost desire to be loved by me, and Thou art worthy of all our love, whether Thou dost console or try us.

XXII. "He hath set me in a place of pasture, and I shall want nothing" (Ps. xxii. 1, 2). Ah, my beloved Jesus! since Thou dost invite me in this feast of love to feed on Thy Divine Flesh, what more can I ever want? "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.) Whom shall I fear, if Thou, O God omnipotent, art my light and my salvation? I give myself all to Thee. Accept me, and then do with me what Thou wilt; chastise me, show Thine indignation towards me when Thou wilt; kill me, destroy me, and I will say always, with Job: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). Whilst I am Thine, and Thou lovest me, I am content to be treated by Thee with every hardship; to be even annihilated, if it so pleases Thee.

XXIII. "I have graven thee in My hands, thy walls are always before My eyes" (Is. xlix. 16). See the loving care that God takes of a soul that He wishes to have to Himself. He carries it written in His hands, so that He

may never forget it, and says, that sooner would a mother forget her own son than He a soul in grace: "And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee" (ib. v. 15). "And thy walls are always before My eyes." His eyes are always open, to watch over that soul, so that its enemies do it not harm: "Thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of Thy good-will" (Ps. v. 13). Our good God surrounds us with the protection of His good-will, wholly solicitous for our good; and so He delivers us from all dangers. Ah, my God! infinite goodness, who more than any other lovest me and desirest my good, I abandon myself entirely to Thee. Should every other hope fail me, Thou wilt never fail me. I know that I also must co-operate by obeying Thy holy will. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Nothing else can I say; behold me ready and determined, my sweet Saviour, to do what Thou pleasest: "Thy will be done." Nothing else do I desire but to accomplish Thy will. But do Thou help me, otherwise I shall do no good at all. Teach me not only to know, but also to do, all that pleases Thee: "teach me to do Thy will." Eternal Father, grant that I may be able to say with truth, as Thy Jesus did whilst He was on earth: "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." My God! this I desire, this I pray for, and this I hope, through the merits of Thy Son and the most holy Mary.

XXIV. "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xiii. 26). O my soul, behold this is all that thy Lord asks of thee; when He comes to visit thee, He would have thy heart and thy will. He gives Himself to thee without reserve; it is but reasonable that thou shouldst also give Him all thyself without reserve, taking care to follow His will in all things: "For the Lord will return, to rejoice over thee in all good things" (Deut. xxx. 9). Act in such a manner as that Jesus, when He comes to thee again, may find that thou hast executed all His designs. My Jesus! I wish to please Thee; help Thou my desire. Give me strength, and do with me whatsoever Thou pleasest.

XXV. "What is there that I ought to do to my vine-

yard, that I have not done to it?" (Is. v. 4.) My soul, hear what thy God says to thee: what ought I to do more for thee than I have done? For love of thee I became man: "I am the Word made flesh." Instead of Lord, I have become servant: "taking the form of a servant." I went so far as to be born in a stable, like a worm—for worms are born in stables: "I am a worm, and no man." I died for thee, I died upon the tree of shame: "I was made obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." What remained more for Me to do, but to give My life for thee? "Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends." But My love has invented and done more for thee. After My death, I have chosen to leave Myself in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to give My whole self as food. Tell Me what more could I have done to gain thy love?

It is true, my Lord and my Redeemer; what can I answer? I have nothing to say. Thou hast been too good to me, and I have been too ungrateful towards Thee. I wonder at Thy immense goodness; I see my own baseness, and I throw myself at Thy feet, and say: Have pity on me, my Jesus, though I have repaid Thy love with so much ingratitude. Avenge Thyself, therefore, I pray Thee, avenge Thyself upon me, and chastise me; but do not abandon me; chastise me and change me. Let me not live any longer ungrateful to Thee. Grant that I may love Thee at least out of gratitude, and that before I die I may make Thee some recompense for Thy love.

XXVI. "Put Me as a seal upon thy heart" (Cant. viii. 6). Yes, my beloved Jesus, since I have consecrated to Thee all my heart, it is but just that I should put Thee as a seal of love upon it, to close the entrance against any other affection; and thus to make known to all that my heart is Thine, and that Thou alone possessest dominion over it. But, my Lord, what dost Thou hope from me, if Thou dost not do the work Thyself? I can do nothing but give Thee my poor heart, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. Behold, I give it all to Thee, I consecrate it to Thee, I sacrifice it to Thee. Do

Thou possess it for ever ; I will no longer have any part in it. If Thou lovest it, mayest Thou be able to preserve it for Thyself. Leave it no longer in my hands, lest I should again take it from Thee. O God most gracious, O Infinite Love, since Thou hast so constrained me to love Thee, I pray Thee, make Thyself loved, make Thyself loved by me. I only wish to live that I may love Thee, I only wish to love Thee in order to please Thee. Thou who dost work miracles to be able to enter into my heart in this Sacrament, work also this one, make my heart all Thine ; but all, all, all, without division, without reserve, so that I may say, both in this life and in eternity, that Thou art the only Lord of my heart, and my only treasure : " God is the God of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Most holy Mary, my Mother and my hope, do thou help me, and I shall certainly be heard. Amen, amen. This I wish, this I hope. So be it.

DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS,

TO BE MADE BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION.

Extracted from the Mss. of St. Francis of Sales.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

O my true and perfect Love, what affection is this that brings Thee to such a miserable thing as I ? Come, yes come, desired of my heart ; my soul sighs for Thee. I offer to Thee, O my God, this communion, to satisfy the desire Thou hast to come and unite me to Thyself, my God, and my All. Oh, what a wonder ! A God descends from heaven for me, and hides His majesty under the vile clothing of the species of bread and wine ! Oh, how true it is, my Lord, that having always loved Thine own, Thou hast loved them especially at the end, when Thou didst institute this Divine Sacrament.

O my God, Thou art goodness itself ; how, then, is it possible that I can love any thing else but Thee ? Ah, Lord, draw me always closer and closer into Thy Heart.

I prefer Thy love and Thy goodness above all that is to be found in the world. Thou art the only object of my affections. I wish for none other but Thee. I will leave all in order to love Thee. Give me grace to do it ; without that I can do nothing.

Ah, my Beloved, if Thou wouldst have me look to Thee, do Thou first turn to me, and by Thy Spirit draw mine to Thee. I am nothing, I can do nothing, I am worth nothing ; therefore let me not be ungrateful for all the graces that Thou hast deigned to grant me. I offer myself for Thy love, to be entirely deprived of every sensible consolation, and to suffer all the afflictions Thou shalt be pleased to send me, whether in time or eternity. I am, and will be all Thine ; I dare to ask Thee not only for Thy gifts, but also for Thyself. I desire to receive Thee, to be more united to Thee.

O Eternal Father, I offer to Thee the Passion of Thy Son for my salvation and that of the whole world. Look not at my sins ; but look at the love of Thy beloved Son towards us, which has drawn Him into this Sacrament. By this love, my God, have pity on me !

My Redeemer, I acknowledge myself to be infinitely unworthy of approaching to receive Thee, by reason of my sins and my want of purity. Therefore I say to Thee, Lord, I am not worthy. Even if I had all the love of the Seraphim, I should still be unfit to receive Thee ; again, then, I repeat, Lord, I am not worthy.

Come, O my sweet Saviour, and work in me that which Thou dost come to me to do. I am nothing but wretchedness ; but Thy goodness does not let Thee see my misery. Come into my soul and sanctify it ; take possession of my heart and purify it ; enter into my body and keep it ; and never separate me from Thy love.

Burn, O consuming Fire, all Thou dost see in me unworthy of Thy presence, and that may put an obstacle to Thy grace and love. O Mother of my Redeemer, have compassion on me a poor sinner ; pray for me, that by thy help I may embrace thy Son with perfect love, and become a soul after His own Heart.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE.

TO BE MADE AFTER COMMUNION, AND AT THE VISIT TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O excess of love ! Sacred Host, I adore Thee within me. One heart is too little to love Thee, my Jesus ; one tongue is not enough to praise Thy goodness. O my Saviour, how great are my obligations to Thee, for visiting such a poor creature as I am ! I offer myself all to Thee, in gratitude for so great a favour.

No, I will no longer live in myself, but that Jesus alone should live in me. He is mine, and I am His, for all eternity. Oh, love, love ; no more sins ! I will never forget the goodness and mercy of God, my Saviour and my guest. Yes, my God, I firmly believe that Thou, Body and Soul, art in my breast : Thy Divinity is now within me, and united to me.

I adore Thee, and I venerate Thee, as if I were the smallest worm crawling along in the dust of its own nothingness, to testify the desire I have to give Thee glory. But is it possible that Thy Infinite Majesty should have deigned to visit the least of Thy creatures ? With a softened heart, my dear Saviour, I thank Thee for this great gift. I thank Thee for it a thousand times. Grant that I may thank Thee for it as Thou dost deserve. May Thy most holy Mother, and all the angels and saints, give Thee thanks for it ! On my part I offer Thee all the praises and thanksgivings that have been and ever shall be offered to Thee by all creatures.

O my God, Thou dost come to unite Thyself to me, to apply to my soul more abundantly the merits of Thy Passion, and to sanctify me. Accomplish in me, then, all that Thou didst come to do. My God, Thou art all-wise and all-powerful, let not the fruit of Thy coming be lost : unite Thyself to me, and me to Thee, by an inseparable union and a perfect love. Unite the abyss of Thy mercy with the abyss of my misery, and make me live a life all divine.

My Jesus, Thou knowest what is wanting in me ; Thou

knowest that without Thee I can do nothing ; Thou knowest my weakness : have pity on me ; give me humility, purity of heart, love and conformity to Thy holy will, strength against my bad habits, remission of my sins, and grace never more to commit them. Give me a thorough contempt for all things, so that I may love none other but Thee. Give me patience to suffer for Thy love all that may happen to me. I hope all from Thee. O most holy Virgin, my dear Mother, beg of thy Son, by the love He bears thee, to grant me, for thy sake, all I ask.

My God, and my only good, I am more pleased in Thy infinite perfections than if they were my own. I rejoice that nothing in the world can take them from Thee, or diminish them. Come, then, Thou art always welcome ; always perfect and infinite in Thy majesty, O my Jesus, my Love and my God. Come and make me all Thine.

My Saviour, by that infinite goodness which made Thee come down to this earth, I pray Thee, let me experience the effects of Thy love, in feeling my soul so absorbed in Thee, that, despising all earthly things, it may see nothing but Thee, and think of nothing but Thee ; that the same love which made Thee die for me on the cross may make me in like manner die in Thee, to live in Thee for all eternity.

O God of my soul, who meritest to be loved above all creatures, I protest that I hold Thee as the only object of my affections, and I prefer Thee to all the goods of the world, and to myself. I desire to be faithful to Thee, and never more to see myself separated from Thee.

I resign and abandon myself entirely to Thee, embracing with all affection and respect Thy will, and Thy just designs over me. And I pray that whatever Thou hast ordained concerning me in time and in eternity may be accomplished ; but I hope one day to see Thy Divine face and Thy infinite beauty. My God, draw me to Thee, to love Thee and to burn with Thy love, by which I would be entirely consumed. Hide me, I pray Thee, in Thyself, that no creature may ever be able to find me again. O Eternal Father, for the love of Thy Son, fill my memory with holy thoughts, which shall constrain it to have a continual remembrance of Thee

and of Thy Son. Oh, make me know and do all that Thou desirest of me. And Thou, O Holy Spirit, fill my will with holy affections, that shall bring forth all those fruits which proceed from Thy love. Illuminate me with Thy light; so shall I walk straight to Thee, and my will shall be no longer free to give itself to any but Thee.

My God and my All, I will no more seek any thing out of Thee, now that I can find all things in Thee. O merciful Father, make me have a care for Thy service, as Thou hast had so much for my good. I wish to employ all my thoughts in seeking ways to please Thee, and in preserving me from offending Thee any more.

O incarnate Lord, make me love Thee, and none other than Thee. Remove from me all occasions which might drive me from Thy love. Let my heart be always occupied in contemplating Thee and serving Thee, Thou that art the master-love of all hearts. Thou didst but come into the world to dwell in the hearts Thou hadst redeemed with Thy Blood; then may my heart be all Thine, do Thou possess it. See, then, all my wants, and enlighten me; excite me, and make me prompt to obey Thy will.

O Jesus Almighty, take from me all that can hinder the effects of Thy power and goodness. I renounce my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to the designs of Thy will. Have pity on me, and cure me of all my impurities and infidelity; fill me with Thy grace and wisdom. I abandon myself wholly to Thee, O my Jesus; I wish to be all Thine, I wish to employ myself with fervour for Thy glory, and to suffer patiently all tribulations at the sight of Thy sufferings. Enable me to employ myself solely in things that are pleasing to Thee. My God, let me discern Thee with a true faith, to know Thee and love Thee; let me know Thy will to fulfil it, let me see myself to confess my deformity, to abhor and humble myself; and in the end let me see Thy Divine face in all eternity. Lord, I have wasted my substance, like the prodigal son; but I have not been able to exhaust Thy mercies. Grant that I may take Thy will for the sole guide of my life, and not my own senses nor human respect. Write in my heart the law of Thy love so deeply, that it may never be effaced.

My God, even if there were no place of torment for the wicked, I would not leave off loving Thee and suffering for Thee. Make me correspond to Thy desires. From this time forth Thou shalt be my portion for ever. I submit myself with confidence to all that Thou shalt ordain for me in time and in eternity. O incarnate Word, wash my heart with Thy Blood, and imprint there, as a sign of Thy love, Thy holy Name of Jesus.

Lord, abandon me not into the power of my vices; remember that I am the work of Thy hands; permit me not to become the prey of demons. I am a sinner, it is true; but I have been redeemed by Thy Blood. Eternal Father, look at the Passion of Thy Son, whose merits sue mercy for me: these I offer to Thee; by these do Thou detach me from worldly affections, and fill me with Thy love, and make me die with resignation, with faith, with confidence, and with perfect love.

O my Jesus, by that eternal love which Thou hast borne me, give me grace to love Thee during the short time that remains for me to live on this earth, that I may afterwards love Thee eternally in heaven. O God of love, make me live only for Thee. When shall I be all Thine, as Thou art all mine? When shall I die to myself, to live only for Thy love? I do not even know how to give myself to Thee as I ought. Ah, my God, take me, and make me all Thine!

My God, I wish for my eyesight only to look at Thee; for my tongue only to speak of Thee; for my heart only to love Thee; for my body only to offer it to Thee; for my life only to sacrifice it to Thee. O God of love, give me Thy love. Infinite Power, help my weakness. Eternal Wisdom, enlighten my darkness. Immense Goodness, pardon my malice. O infinite Goodness, too late have I loved and known Thee: do with me what Thou pleasest; I wish for nothing but what Thou shalt do.

O Blessed Virgin, I rejoice with thee in that thou hast gained the heart of thy God; ah, unite me wholly to thy Son, speak to Him for me, and obtain for me the grace of following all His inspirations. Thou must teach me to practise the virtues thou didst exercise on earth,

and detach me from affection to all that is not God, that I may love Him with all my strength.

My God, enkindle Thy love in me, so that I may seek nothing else but Thy pleasure; so that nothing may please me that does not please Thee; and drive from my heart all things that are not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with true affection: My God, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy Passion, that, Thy sufferings and Thy death being always before my eyes, they may continually excite my love towards Thee, and make me desirous of rendering Thee some token of gratitude for so much love. Give me also a great love to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast revealed the great affection Thou dost bear us. Besides this, I beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother: give me grace always to love and serve her; always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honour her; and give to me and to all men a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and next in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee to grant me a holy death. Enable me at that moment to receive Thee with great love in the Most Holy Viaticum; so that, united to Thee, burning with a holy fire, and with a great desire of seeing Thee, I may go forth from this life to embrace Thy feet the first time it shall be given me to see Thee.

O my King, come and reign alone in my soul; do Thou possess it entirely, that it may not serve nor obey any thing but Thy love.

O my Jesus, would that I could annihilate myself all for Thee, who hast annihilated all Thy life for me!

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls that Thou hast redeemed with so much suffering and grief. Let me never lose Thee. Thou hast given Thyself all to me, let me be all Thine; let all my eagerness be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to please Thee; I love Thee because Thou art worthy of it: my greatest sorrow is to think I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, make me feel the grief Thou

hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died before, and had never offended Thee! Oh, love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I will rather lose my life a thousand times than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I had died when I was in sin, I could never love Thee again: I thank Thee for giving me time, and calling me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. For this reason hast Thou borne with me, that I should love Thee; yes, I will love Thee.

Ah, by the Blood which Thou hast shed for me, permit me not to betray Thee again: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded for ever." What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honours? God, God, I will have God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me, Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me altogether to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thee, that I may love none other but Thee: make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I am in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say to Thee: My Jesus, I cannot lose Thee more?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; accept of me to love Thee, and do Thou give me Thy love. I wish to love Thee much in this life, that I may love Thee much in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but make me know the great Good that I love, and give me such a love as Thou dost desire. May I conquer all things to please Thee!

O Mary, of thee, who so much desirest to see thy Son beloved, do I ask this grace, to love Him during all the remainder of my life; and I desire nothing more. My Lady and my Mother, I trust in thee; thou dost obtain all thou dost ask of thy God; thou dost pray for all who are devoted to thee, pray also for me.

PETITIONS TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

O my Jesus, now that Thou, who art the true Life, art come to me, make me die to the world, to live only to Thee, my Redeemer; by the flames of Thy love destroy in me all that is displeasing to Thee, and give me a true desire to gratify and please Thee in all things.

Give me that true humility which shall make me love contempt and self-abjection, and take from me all ambition of putting myself forward. Give me the spirit of mortification, that I may deny myself all those things that do not tend to Thy love, and may lovingly embrace that which is displeasing to the senses and to self-love.

Give me a perfect resignation to Thy will, that I may accept in peace pains, infirmities, loss of friends or property, desolations, persecutions, and all that comes to me from Thy hand. I offer Thee all myself, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. And give me grace always to repeat this entire offering of myself, especially at the time of my death. May I, then, so sacrifice my life to Thee, with all my affection, in union with the sacrifice that Thou didst make of Thy life for me to the Eternal Father. My Jesus, enlighten me, and make me know Thy goodness, and the obligation I am under to love Thee above all, for the love Thou hast borne me in dying for me, and in leaving Thyself in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I pray Thee to give Thy light to all infidels who know Thee not, to all heretics who are out of the Church, and to all sinners who live deprived of Thy grace. My Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, and especially N. N.; alleviate the pains they suffer, and shorten the time of their banishment from Thy sight; do this through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother and all the Saints.

My God, enkindle the flame of Thy love within me, so that I may seek nothing but Thy pleasure, that nothing may please me but pleasing Thee; I drive from my heart every thing which is not agreeable to Thee. May I al-

ways be able to say with real affection: O God, my God, I wish for Thee alone and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy Most Sacred Passion, that Thy sufferings and death may be ever before my eyes to excite me to love Thee always, and to make me desire to give Thee some grateful compensation for Thy so great love. Give me also a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast made known the exceeding tenderness Thou hast for us. I also beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother: give me grace always to love and serve her, always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honour her and confide in her patronage; and grant to me and to all men ever to have a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and then in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee grant me a happy death. Grant that I may then receive Thee with great love in the Most Holy Viaticum, that in Thy embrace, burning with a holy fire, and a great desire of seeing Thee, I may quit this life to throw myself at Thy feet the first time it shall be my lot to see Thee.

Above all, I pray Thee, O my Jesus, to give me the grace of prayer, that I may recommend myself always to Thee and Thy most holy Mother, especially in time of temptation: and I pray Thee, by Thy merits, to grant me holy perseverance and Thy holy love.

Bless me, my Jesus, and bless me altogether,—my soul, my body, my senses, and my faculties. Bless especially my tongue, that it may only speak for Thy glory. Bless my eyes, that they may not look at any thing that might tempt me to displease Thee. Bless my taste, that it may not offend Thee by intemperance; and bless all the members of my body, that they may all serve Thee and not offend Thee. Bless my memory, that it may always remember Thy love and the favours Thou hast accorded me. Bless my understanding, that it may know Thy goodness, and the obligation I have of loving Thee; and that it may see all that I must avoid, and all that I must do to conform myself to Thy holy will. Above all, bless my will, that it may love no other but Thee, the infi-

nite Good ; that it may seek for nothing but to please Thee and may take delight in nothing but what conduces to Thy glory.

O my King, come Thou and reign alone in my soul ; take entire possession of it, that it may neither serve nor obey any thing but Thy love.

Oh, my Jesus, that I might spend myself all for Thee, who hast spent all Thy life for me !

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed with so much labour and sorrow. Never let me lose Thee again. Thou hast given Thyself all to me ; make me to be all Thine, and let my only wish be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to give Thee pleasure. I love Thee, because Thou art worthy of my love. I have no greater grief than that of thinking that I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of that grief which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died and never offended Thee ! O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope ! I will rather lose my life, and a thousand lives, than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I were to die in sin, I could no more love Thee. I thank Thee that Thou givest me time, and dost call me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. Thou hast borne with me so long, that I might love Thee. Yes, and I will love Thee. Ah, by the Blood that Thou hast shed for me, suffer me not to betray Thee again. "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded for ever." What is the world ? what are riches ? what are pleasures ? what are honours ? God, God, I wish for God alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me ; Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me wholly to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thyself, so that I may love none other but Thee. Make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I stand in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say : My Jesus, I can no longer lose Thee ?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not ; suffer me to love Thee, and give me Thy holy love. I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee ; but do Thou make me know the great good that I love, and give me the love Thou dost desire to see in me. Enable me to overcome all things to please Thee.

PRAYER OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

WOUND, O my most tender Jesus, the inmost of my soul with the sweet dart of Thy love, that through Thy love and the desire of possessing Thee, my soul may languish and melt within me, and so long to quit this life, to come and unite itself perfectly with Thee in a happy eternity. Make my soul always to hunger after Thee, the Bread of angels, my Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament. May it ever thirst after Thee, O fountain of life and light ! May it ever desire Thee, seek Thee, speak to Thee alone, find Thee, and do all things to Thy praise and glory to the end ! Thou, my Redeemer, art my only hope, my riches, my consolation, my peace, my refuge, my wisdom, my portion, and my treasure. On Thee may my heart and my mind be ever fixed ! Amen.

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY MARY,

TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS, AND LOVE TOWARDS HER.

O MARY, thou dost so much desire to see this thy Son Jesus loved ; if thou lovest me, this is the grace I ask of thee, and which thou must procure for me : obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ, and not to love any other than Him. Thou obtainest from Him all that thou dost wish ; listen to me, then, pray for me and comfort me ; bind me

in such a manner to Jesus, that I shall no longer be able to leave off loving Him. Obtain for me also a great love towards thee, who art of all creatures the most loving, the most lovely, and the most loved by God. I rely greatly on thy compassion, and I love thee, my Lady; but I love thee only a little: ask thy God to give me a greater love; for to love thee is a grace which God grants only to those whom thou dost wish to be saved. Live Jesus our love, and Mary our hope!

MEDITATIONS

FOR

THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

MEDITATION I.

ON THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

OUR most loving Redeemer, knowing that He must leave this earth and return to His Father as soon as He should have accomplished the work of our redemption by His death, and seeing that the hour of His death was now come,—“Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world unto the Father” (St. John xiii. 1),—would not leave us alone in this valley of tears, and therefore what did He do? He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which He left us His whole Self. ‘No tongue,’ said St. Peter of Alcantara, ‘is able to declare the greatness of the love that Jesus bears to every soul: and therefore this Spouse, when He would leave this earth, in order that His absence might not cause us to forget Him, left us as a memorial this Blessed Sacrament, in which He Himself remained; for He would not that there should be any other pledge to keep alive our remembrance of Him than He Himself.’ Jesus, therefore, would not be separated from us by His death; but He instituted this Sacrament of Love, in order to be with us even to the end of the world: “Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the world” (St. Matt. xxviii. 20). Behold Him, then, as faith teaches us,—behold Him on so many altars shut up as in so many prisons of love, in order that He may be found by every one that seeks Him. But, O Lord, says St. Bernard, this does not become Thy ma-

jesty. Jesus Christ answers, It is enough that it becomes My love.

They feel great tenderness and devotion who go to Jerusalem and visit the cave where the Incarnate Word was born, the hall where He was scourged, the hill of Calvary on which He died, and the sepulchre where He was buried; but how much greater ought not our tenderness to be when we visit an altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament! The Ven. Father John Avila used to say, that of all sanctuaries there is not one to be found more excellent and devout than a church where Jesus is sacramentally present.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my beloved Jesus, O God, who hast loved men with such exceeding love! what more canst Thou do to make Thyself loved by these ungrateful men? Oh, if men loved Thee, all the churches would be continually filled with people prostrate on the ground adoring and thanking Thee, and burning with love for Thee at seeing Thee with the eyes of faith hidden in a tabernacle. But no; men, forgetful of Thee and of Thy love, are ready enough to court a man from whom they hope for some miserable advantage, while they leave Thee, O my Lord, abandoned and alone. Oh, that I could by my devotion make reparation for such ingratitude! I am sorry that I also have hitherto been like them, careless and ungrateful. But for the future I will not be so any longer, and I will devote myself to Thy service as much as I possibly can. Do Thou inflame me with Thy holy love, so that from this day forth I may live only to love and to please Thee. Thou deservest the love of all hearts. If at one time I have despised Thee, I now desire nothing but to love Thee. O my Jesus, Thou art my Love and my only Good, 'my God and my All.' Most holy Virgin Mary, obtain for me, I pray thee, a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

MEDITATION II.

JESUS REMAINS ON THE ALTAR, THAT EVERY BODY MAY BE ABLE TO FIND HIM.

St. Teresa said, that in this world it is impossible for all subjects to speak to the king. As for the poor, the most they can hope for is, to speak with him by means of some third person. But to speak with Thee, O King of Heaven, there is no need of third persons; for every one that wishes can find Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament, and can speak to Thee at his pleasure and without restraint.

For this reason, said the same saint, Jesus Christ has concealed His majesty in the Sacrament, under the appearance of bread, in order to give us more confidence, and to take away from us all fear of approaching Him. Oh, how Jesus seems continually to exclaim from the altar: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). Come, He says, come, ye poor; come, ye infirm; come, ye afflicted; come, ye just and ye sinners, and you shall find in Me a remedy for all your losses and afflictions: such is the desire of Jesus Christ; to console every one who has recourse to Him, He remains day and night on our altars, that He may be found by all, and that He may bestow favours upon all. Hence the Saints experienced in this world such pleasure in remaining in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, that days and nights appeared to them as moments. The Countess of Feria having become a nun of the order of St. Clare, was never wearied of remaining in the choir in sight of the tabernacle: being asked one day what she was doing so long before the Most Holy Sacrament, she answered with surprise: 'What do I do before the Blessed Sacrament? what do I do? I return thanks, I love and I pray!' St. Philip Neri being in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, exclaimed: 'Behold my love, behold all my love!' Ah, if Jesus were thus our whole love, days and nights in His presence would appear also to us as moments.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus, from this day forward I also hope to say always to Thee, when I come to visit Thee on Thy altars:

'Behold my love, behold all my love!' Yes, my beloved Redeemer, I will love none other but Thee; I desire that Thou shouldst be the only love of my soul. I seem to die of sorrow when I think that hitherto I have loved creatures and my own pleasures more than Thee, and have turned my back upon Thee, the Sovereign Good. But Thou wouldst not have me lost, and therefore hast Thou borne with me with so much patience; and instead of chastising me, Thou hast pierced my heart with so many darts of love, that I could no longer resist Thy kindness, but have given myself up to Thee; I see that Thou wouldst have me to be entirely Thine. But since Thou wouldst have it to be so, do thou make me so Thyself; for it is Thou who must do it. Do Thou detach my heart from all earthly affections and from myself, and grant that I may seek none other but Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may speak of none but Thee, and that I may only desire and sigh to burn with love for Thee, and to live and die for Thee alone. O love of my Jesus, come and occupy my whole heart, and expel from it all other love but that of God! I love Thee, O Jesus in the Sacrament, I love Thee, my Treasure, my Love, my All. O Mary, my hope, pray for me, and make me belong entirely to Jesus.

MEDITATION III.

ON THE GREAT GIFT WHICH JESUS HAS MADE US BY GIVING HIMSELF
TO US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

The love of Jesus Christ was not satisfied with sacrificing for us His Divine Life in the midst of a sea of ignominies and torments, in order to prove to us the affection that He bore us; but besides all this, in order to oblige us to love Him more, on the night before His death He would leave us His whole Self as our food in the Holy Eucharist. God is omnipotent; but after He has given Himself to a soul in this Sacrament of love, He has nothing more to give her. The Council of Trent says, that Jesus, in giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion, pours forth, as it were, all the riches of His infinite love in this gift:

'He has, as it were, poured forth the treasures of His love towards man.' How would that vassal esteem himself honoured, writes St. Francis of Sales, were his prince, whilst he was at table, to send him a portion of his own dish; and what would it be if this portion were a piece torn out from his own arm? Jesus in the Holy Communion gives us for our food, not only a portion of His own meal and of His most Sacred Flesh, but all His Body: "Take and eat, this is My Body." And together with His Body He gives us also His Soul and His Divinity; so that, as St. Chrysostom says, our Lord, in giving Himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament, gives us all that He has, and nothing more remains for Him to give us: 'He gave all to thee, and left nothing for Himself.' O wonderful prodigy of Divine love, that God, who is the Lord of all, makes Himself entirely ours!

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my dear Jesus, what more canst Thou do to make us love Thee? Oh, make us understand what an excess of love Thou hast shown us in reducing Thyself to food, in order to unite Thyself thus to us poor sinners! Thou, therefore, my dear Redeemer, hast had so much affection for me, that Thou hast not refused to give Thyself again and again entirely for me in the Holy Communion. And yet I have had the courage to drive Thee so many times away from my soul! But Thou canst not despise a humble and contrite heart. Thou didst become man for my sake, Thou didst die for me, Thou didst even go so far as to become my food; and what more can there remain for Thee to do to gain my love? Oh, that I could die with grief every time that I remember to have thus despised Thy grace! I repent, O my Love, with my whole heart, for having offended Thee. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O Infinite Love! I desire nothing but to love Thee, and I fear nothing but to live without Thy love. My beloved Jesus, do not refuse to come for the future into my soul. Come, because I would rather die a thousand times than drive Thee away again, and I will do all I can to please Thee. Come and inflame my whole

soul with Thy love. Grant that I may forget every thing, to think only of Thee, and to aspire to Thee alone, my Sovereign and my only Good. O Mary, my Mother, pray for me; and by thy prayers make me grateful for all the love of Jesus towards me.

MEDITATION IV.

ON THE GREAT LOVE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS SHOWN US IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

"Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (St. John xiii. 1). Jesus knowing that the hour of His death was come, desired to leave us, before He died, the greatest pledge of His affection that He could give us; and this was the gift of the Most Holy Sacrament: "He loved them to the end;" which St. Chrysostom explains, 'He loved them with extreme love.' He loved men with the greatest love with which He could love them, by giving them His whole Self. But at what time did Jesus institute this great Sacrament, in which He has left us Himself? On the night preceding His death: "The same night in which He was betrayed" (writes the Apostle), "He took bread; and giving thanks, broke and said, Take ye and eat; this is My Body" (1 Cor. xi. 23, 24). At the very time that men were preparing to put Him to death, He gave them this last proof of His love. The marks of affection which we receive from our friends at the time of their death, remain more deeply impressed on our hearts; for this reason did Jesus bestow on us this gift of the Blessed Sacrament just before His death. With reason, then, did St. Thomas call this gift 'a sacrament and pledge of love;' and St. Bernard, 'the love of loves,' because in this Sacrament Jesus Christ united and accomplished all the other acts of love which He had shown us. Hence St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi called the day on which Jesus instituted this Sacrament, 'the day of love.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O infinite love of Jesus, worthy of being loved with a like infinite love! Thou, my Lord, dost love men so much; how is it, then, that men love Thee so little in return? What more couldst Thou do to make Thyself loved by them? O my Jesus, Thou art so amiable and so loving; make Thyself, I pray Thee, known; make Thyself loved. When shall I love Thee as Thou hast loved me? Oh, discover to me more and more the greatness of Thy mercy, in order that I may burn ever more and more with Thy love, and always seek to please Thee. O beloved One of my soul, would that I had always loved Thee! Alas, there was a time when I not only did not love Thee, but despised Thy grace and Thy love! I am consoled by the sorrow which I feel for it, and I hope for pardon through Thy promise to forgive him that repents of his sins. To Thee, O my Saviour, do I turn all my affections; help me, through the merits of Thy Passion, to love Thee with my whole strength. Oh, that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me! O Mary, my Mother, do thou obtain for me the grace from henceforth to love God alone.

MEDITATION V.

ON THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH JESUS IN THE HOLY COMMUNION.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite says that the principal effect of love is to tend to union. For this very purpose did Jesus institute the Holy Communion, that He might unite Himself entirely to our souls. He had given Himself to us as our Master, our Example, and our Victim; it only remained for Him to give Himself to us as our Food, that He might become one with us; as food becomes one with the person that eats it. This He did by instituting this Sacrament of love: 'The last degree of love' (says St. Bernardine of Sienna) 'is when He gave Himself to us to be our food; because He gave Himself to be united with

us in every way, as food and he who takes it are mutually united.' So that Jesus Christ was not satisfied with uniting Himself to our human nature; but He would, by this Sacrament, find a way of uniting Himself also to each one of us, so as to make Himself wholly one with him who receives Him. Hence St. Francis of Sales writes: 'In no other action can our Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which He, as it were, annihilates Himself, and reduces Himself to food, that He may penetrate our souls, and unite Himself to the hearts of His faithful.' Because Jesus loved us ardently, He desired to unite Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, in order that we might become the same thing with Him; thus writes St. Chrysostom: 'He mingled Himself with us, that we might be one; for this belongs to those who love greatly.' Thou wouldst, in short, O God of love, that our hearts and Thine should form but one heart. 'Thou wouldst that we should have one heart with Thee,' said St. Laurence Justinian. And Jesus Himself said this: "He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 57). He, therefore, that communicates, abides in Jesus, and Jesus abides in Him; and this union is not of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. As two wax tapers, when melted, says St. Cyril of Alexandria, unite themselves together into one, so he that communicates becomes one with Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, imagine, when we communicate, that Jesus Christ says to us that which He said one day to His beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres: 'Behold, O my daughter, the beautiful union between Me and thee; come, then, love Me, and let us remain constantly united in love, and never more be separated.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my Jesus, this is what I seek of Thee, and what I will always seek for from Thee in the Holy Communion: 'Let us be always united, and never more be separated.' I know that Thou wilt not separate Thyself from me, if I do not first separate myself from Thee. But this is my fear, lest I should in future separate myself from Thee by sin, as I have done in times past. O my blessed Redeemer,

permit it not: 'Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.' As long as I am alive, I am in danger of this; oh, through the merits of Thy death, I beseech Thee let me die, rather than repeat this great injury against Thee. I repeat it, and pray Thee to grant me Thy grace always to repeat: 'Suffer me not to be separated from Thee; suffer me not to be separated from Thee.' O God of my soul, I love Thee; I love Thee, and will always love Thee, and will love Thee alone. I protest before heaven and earth that I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee. O my Jesus, hear me; I desire Thee alone, and nothing but Thee. O Mary, Mother of Mercy, pray for me now; and obtain for me the grace never more to separate myself from Jesus, and to love only Jesus.

MEDITATION VI.

ON THE DESIRE WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS TO UNITE HIMSELF TO US
IN THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"Jesus knowing that His hour was come" (St. John xiii. 1). This hour, which Jesus called 'His hour,' was the hour of that night in which His Passion was to begin. But why did He call so sad an hour His hour? Because this was the hour for which He had sighed during His whole life, having determined to leave us in this night the Holy Communion, by which He desired to unite Himself entirely with the souls whom He loved, and for whom He was soon to give His Blood and His Life. Behold how He spoke on that night to His disciples: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you." By which words He would express to us the desire and anxiety that He had to unite Himself with us in this Sacrament of love. "With desire have I desired;" these words, said St. Laurence Justinian, were words which came from the Heart of Jesus, which was burning with infinite love: 'This is the voice of the most ardent charity.' Now the same flame which burnt then in the Heart of Jesus, burns there at present; and He gives the same invitation to all of us to-day to receive Him

as He did then to His disciples: "Take ye and eat; this is My Body" (St. Matt. xxvi. 26). And to allure us to receive Him with affection, He promises Paradise to us: "He that eateth My flesh, hath everlasting life" (St. John vi. 55). And if we refuse to receive Him, He threatens us with death: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you" (St. John vi. 54). These invitations, promises, and threats, all arise from the desire of Jesus Christ to unite Himself to us in the Holy Communion, through the love that He bears us. 'There is not a bee,' said our Lord to St. Matilda, 'which seeks the honey out of the flowers with such eagerness of delight, as I have to enter into the souls that desire Me.' Jesus, because He loves us, desires to be loved by us; and because He desires us, He will have us desire Him. 'God thirsts to be thirsted after,' writes St. Gregory. Blessed is that soul that approaches the Holy Communion with a great desire to be united to Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My adorable Jesus, Thou canst not give us greater proofs of Thy love, to show us how much Thou lovest us. Thou hast given Thy life for us; Thou hast bequeathed Thyself to us in the Holy Sacrament, in order that we may come and nourish ourselves with Thy flesh; and Thou art most anxious that we should receive Thee. How, then, can we behold all these proofs of Thy love, and not burn with love for Thee? Begone, ye earthly affections, begone from my heart; it is you that hinder me from burning with love for Jesus as He burns with love for me. And what other pledges of Thy love can I expect, O my Redeemer, than those which Thou hast already given me? Thou hast sacrificed Thy whole life for the love of me; Thou hast embraced for my sake a most bitter and infamous death; Thou hast for my sake reduced Thyself almost to annihilation, by becoming food in the Holy Eucharist in order to give Thyself entirely to us. O Lord, let me no longer live ungrateful for such great goodness. I thank Thee for having given me time to bewail the offences I have committed against Thee, and to love Thee during the days that

remain to me in this life. I repent, O Sovereign Good, for having hitherto despised Thy love. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O Infinite Treasure! I love Thee, O Infinite Love, who art worthy of infinite love! Oh, help me, my Jesus, to discard from my heart all affections that are not directed to Thee; so that from this day forward I may not desire, or seek, or love any other but Thee. My beloved Lord, grant that I may always find Thee, grant that I may always love Thee. Do Thou take possession of my whole will, in order that I may never desire any thing but what is pleasing to Thee. My God, my God, whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, who art the Supreme Good? I do indeed desire Thee, and nothing more. O Mary, my Mother, take my heart into thy keeping, and fill it with pure love for Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION VII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION OBTAINS FOR US PERSEVERANCE IN DIVINE GRACE.

When Jesus comes to the soul in the Holy Communion, He brings to it every grace, and specially the grace of holy perseverance. This is the principal effect of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, to nourish the soul that receives It with this food of life, and to give it great strength to advance unto perfection, and to resist those enemies who desire our death. Hence Jesus calls Himself in this Sacrament Heavenly Bread: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 51, 52). Even as earthly bread sustains the life of the body, so this heavenly bread sustains the life of the soul, by making it persevere in the grace of God. Therefore the Council of Trent teaches, that Holy Communion is that remedy which delivers us from daily faults and preserves us from mortal sins. Innocent III. writes, that Jesus Christ by His Passion delivers us from sins committed, and by the Holy Eucharist from sins which we might commit. Therefore St. Bonaventure says, that sinners must not keep away from Communion because they

have been sinners ; on the contrary, for this very reason they ought to receive it more frequently ; because 'the more infirm a person feels himself, the more he is in want of a physician.'

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

Miserable sinner that I am, O Lord, wherefore do I lament my weakness when I consider my many falls from grace ? How was it possible that I should have resisted the assaults of the devil while I stayed away from Thee, who art my strength ? If I had oftener approached the Holy Communion, I should not have been so often overcome by my enemies. But in future it shall not be so : "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped ; I shall not be confounded for ever." No, I will no longer rely on my own resolution. Thou alone art my hope, O my Jesus ; Thou wilt give me strength, that I may no more fall into sin. I am weak ; but Thou, by the Holy Communion, wilt make me strong against every temptation : "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Forgive me, O my Jesus, all the offences I have committed against Thee, of which I repent with my whole heart. I resolve rather to die than ever to offend Thee again ; and I trust, in Thy Passion, that Thou wilt give me Thy help to persevere in Thy grace to the end of my life : "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped ; I shall not be confounded for ever." And with St. Bonaventure I will say the same to thee, O Mary, my Mother : 'In thee, O Lady, have I hoped ; I shall not be confounded for ever.'

MEDITATION VIII.

ON PREPARATION FOR, AND THANKSGIVING AFTER, COMMUNION.

Cardinal Bona asks, wherefore it happens that so many souls, after so many Communions, make so little advance in the way of God ? and he answers : 'The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who eats it'; that is to say, in the want of due preparation on the part of the communicant. Fire soon burns dry wood, but not that which is green, because the latter is not fit to burn. The

Saints derived great profit from their Communions, because they were very careful in their preparation for it. There are two principal things which we should endeavour to obtain in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Communion. The first is, detachment from creatures, by driving from our heart every thing that is not of God and for God. Although the soul may be in a state of grace, yet if the heart is occupied by earthly affections, the more there is of earth in the soul, so much less room will there be for Divine love. St. Gertrude once asked our Lord what preparation He required of her for Holy Communion, and Jesus answered her : 'I require none other from thee, but that thou shouldst come to receive Me void of thyself.' The second thing that is necessary in order to reap great fruit from Communion is, the desire to receive Jesus Christ with the view of loving Him more. Gerson says that at this banquet none are satiated but those who feel great hunger. Hence St. Francis of Sales writes, that the principal intention of a soul in receiving Communion should be to advance in the love of God. 'He' (says the Saint) 'should be received for love, who out of pure love alone gives Himself to us.' And therefore Jesus said to St. Matilda : 'When thou art going to communicate, desire all the love that any soul ever had for Me, and I will receive it according to thy desire, as if it were thine own.'

It is also necessary to make a thanksgiving after Communion. There is no prayer more dear to God than that which is made after Communion. We must occupy this time in acts of love and prayers. The devout acts of love which we then make have greater merit in the sight of God than those which we make at other times, because they are then animated by the presence of Jesus Christ, who is united to our souls. And as to prayers, St. Teresa says that Jesus, after Communion, remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to it : 'What wilt thou that I should do for thee ?' Soul, I am come from heaven on purpose to bestow graces upon thee ; ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and thou shalt be heard. Oh, what treasures of grace do they lose who pray but a short time to God after Holy Communion !

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of love, dost Thou, then, so much desire to dispense Thy favours to us, and yet are we so little anxious to obtain them? Oh, what sorrow we shall feel at the hour of death, when we think of this negligence, so pernicious to our souls! O my Lord, forget, I beseech Thee, all that is past; for the future, with Thy help, I will prepare myself better, by endeavouring to detach my affections from every thing that prevents me from receiving all those graces which Thou desirest to bestow upon me. And after Communion I will lift up my heart to Thee as much as I can, in order to obtain Thy help that I may advance in Thy love,—oh, grant me grace to accomplish this. O my Jesus, how negligent have I hitherto been in loving Thee! The time which Thou in Thy mercy mayest yet allot to me in this life, is the time to prepare myself for death, and to make amends by my love for the offences I have committed against Thee. I will spend it entirely in lamenting my sins and in loving Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, my love; I love Thee, my only Good; have pity on me, and do not forsake me. And thou, O Mary, my hope, do not cease to help me by thy holy intercession!

ACCOUNT

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN STOLEN IN A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NAPLES, WAS MIRACULOUSLY FOUND, IN THE YEAR 1772.

HAVING received information from many persons of the wonderful occurrence which I am now going briefly to relate, I endeavoured to collect evidence sufficient to enable me to publish an account of it: and I first obtained a full relation of the fact, written by a priest of the same town, who was one of the eye-witnesses of the miracle. But not satisfied with this, I read myself the authentic process which was drawn up by the Archiepiscopal Court of Naples, by order of his eminence Cardinal Sersale, the present Archbishop. The process is very long, consisting of 364 pages,—a most careful investigation into the facts having been made by the officers of the court from the evidence of many priests and lay persons, all of whom, in perfect agreement, made their depositions on oath.

It happened, on the morning of the 28th of January in the past year 1772, at a place called S. Pietro à Paterno, in the diocese of Naples, that the tabernacle of the parish-church, in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, was found open, and that the two ciboriums, a large and a small one, containing many particles, had been taken away.

For several days the whole neighbourhood was in the greatest distress and grief; and though the most diligent search was made, no tidings could be obtained either of the ciboriums or of the sacred particles. At length, on Thursday the 18th of February, a certain youth, Giuseppe Orifice, of about eighteen years old, as he was passing in the evening near the property of the Duke of Grottolelle, saw a number of lights, which had the appearance of bright

stars. The following evening he saw the same thing; and on coming home he told his father what he had seen; his father, however, would not believe him.

On the following day, about an hour before sunrise, the father was passing by the same spot, with Giuseppe and his brother Giovanni (a child of eleven years), who, turning to his father, said, "See, father, the lights of which Giuseppe spoke to you yesterday evening, and you would not believe him."

On the evening of the same day, the same boys, on coming home, again saw the lights in the same place. D. Girolamo Guarino, the confessor of Giuseppe Orefice, was then informed of it, who, in company with his brother D. Diego, also a priest, went to the spot where the lights had been seen, and meanwhile sent for Orefice, who, on coming there with his brother and a person called Tomaso Piccino, again saw the lights; but at that time the priests saw nothing.

On the evening of Monday, the 23d of February, Orefice returned to the spot with Piccino and a man named Carlo Marotta, and met on the road two strangers, who stopped and asked them what those many lights were which they had just distinctly seen, and which twinkled like stars? They replied that they did not know; and, taking leave of the strangers, they ran in haste to mark the spot where they had seen the lights. As soon as they had marked the spot, which was distant a few steps from the hedge, and in which was a poplar-tree higher than the rest of the trees, they went to find the two priests already mentioned, told them what had occurred, and returned all together to the spot.

When they were all there, with a child of five years, nephew to the two priests, the child cried out, "See, there are the lights, which look like two candles." (Here we must observe, that the lights did not always appear in the same manner.) At the same moment Orefice saw these two lights, and said they shone like two stars; Carlo and Tomaso also saw them, and three other children of Signor Guarino, close to the poplar already mentioned.

After this they heard the shouting of many people, who, from a stack of straw which was on the property,

were begging the priest to come and see in the stack a great light in the appearance of a flame. In the meantime, a woman, named Lucia Marotta, threw herself with her face to the ground on the spot where the light was seen.

The priests and many other persons ran up, and having lifted up the woman, commenced to dig the ground; but then they found nothing. The two brothers, Giuseppe Orefice, with Tomaso Piccino and Carlo Marotta, then returned to the town; and going along the Strada Regia, they heard the cries of those who had remained on the spot. Going back there, Piccino fell suddenly upon his face; and after a few steps, Giuseppe felt himself pushed forward on the shoulders, and he also at once fell to the ground. In the same way, and at the same moment, the other two, Carlo Marotta and Giovanni, Giuseppe's brother, also fell; and all four felt their heads wounded, as if they had received a severe blow with a stick.

Having got up, they went forward a few steps; and both Giuseppe, as also Carlo, Tomaso, and Giovanni, saw a brilliant light as of the sun coming forth from beneath the poplar-tree; and they all four saw rising out of this light, to about four or five feet in height, a dove, which was almost as brilliant as the light itself: the dove, however, gliding down into the earth at the foot of the poplar, from which it came out, disappeared, as also did the light. What the dove signified is not known; but it appears certain that it was something supernatural; and all the persons already mentioned gave evidence of the fact upon oath before the Vicar-General of Naples.

After this, remaining in the same place, they all cried out, "See, there are the lights!" And going on their knees they began to seek for the sacred particles. While Piccino was scooping out the earth with his hands, they saw one particle come out white as paper. They then sent to call the priests. D. Diego Guarino came, and kneeling down he took the sacred particle and put it in a white linen handkerchief, amid the tears and devotion of all the people, who wept bitterly.

He then began to search more carefully; and having

removed some more earth, he saw a group of about forty particles appear, which had not lost their whiteness, although they had been buried for nearly a month from the time they were stolen. They were placed in the same handkerchief, and the earth in which they were found was also removed.

It being now rumoured about, other priests of the place came to the spot, bringing with them a ciborium, cotta, stole, canopy, and torches. In the mean time, a priest and a gentleman went to Monsignor the Vicar-General to know what was to be done. An order came, that the particles should be carried processionally to the church. They did so, and arrived at the church about half-past eleven at night, when the particles were placed in the tabernacle.

This took place on the night of the 24th of February. The people were much consoled, but not fully so, because the greater part of the particles, as was supposed, were still wanting.

But on the evening of the following Tuesday, the 25th, a small light, but very brilliant, was seen in the same place as at the first, by many persons, country-people, gentlemen, as also by the priests D. Diego Guarino and D. Giuseppe Lindtner, who wrote for me an account of the whole affair, as I mentioned at the beginning. This priest being much terrified, pointed to a mustard-plant which was growing there, and cried out, "O Jesus, O Jesus! look at the light there, look at it!" Upon which the others also saw a most dazzling light, which rose about a foot and a half from the ground, and formed itself on the top into the figure of a rose. Giuseppe Orefice, who was there, affirmed that the light was so brilliant that his eyes remained for some time dazzled and dimmed.

They began, therefore, to seek the remainder of the particles in that place, but found none; but on the evening of the following day, the 26th of February, a number of lights were seen round the stack of straw by three cavalry soldiers of the regiment called Borbone, Pasquale de S. Angelo of the diocese of Atri and Penne, Giuseppe Lanzano, and Angelo di Costanzo of Acerra, who were all examined before the Archiepiscopal court. These deposed

before Monsignor the Vicar-General, that as they were riding round the royal villa of Caserta, where his majesty the king then resided, they saw on the property above mentioned "several lights like shining stars." These are the very words of the soldiers, as taken down in the process.

Moreover, on the same evening of the 26th, Signor D. Ferdinando Haam, a gentleman of Prague in Bohemia, Chancellor and Secretary for letters to the Embassy of his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, was returning from the city of Caserta at about nine at night, along the Strada Regia near to the above-mentioned property: he got down from his carriage to go and see the place where he had heard the stolen particles had been found two days before. On arriving there he found many persons, and among them the priest D. Giuseppe Lindtner, with whom he was acquainted, who told him the whole history both of the sacrilege and of the miraculous discovery of the particles. Signor Haam, after having heard the priest, related that he also, eight or nine days before, on the 17th or 18th of the month, not having then heard either of the particles that had been stolen or of the lights that had been seen, was passing by this place about nine at night, and that he saw "a great number of lights amounting to about a thousand," and at the same time a number of persons who were standing in silence and with devotion round the lights. Being much frightened at what he saw, he asked the driver what those lights were; he replied, "that perhaps they were accompanying the Most Holy Viaticum to some sick person." "No," replied Signor Haam, "that cannot be, otherwise we should at least hear the bells." Hence he suspected that these lights were the effect of some diabolical sorcery, and so much the more as the horse had stopped, and would not go on a step; he therefore made the driver get down, but it was impossible to make the horse go on, it trembled all over and foamed at the mouth. At length, after many attempts, the horse, drawn away as by force out of the road which led to the ground, set off with such speed that the driver cried out, "O Jesus, what will come of this?" And so Signor D. Ferdinando

returned to Naples seized with great fear. He himself deposed the whole of this in the Archiepiscopal Court, as may be read in the process, page 60, &c.

On the evening of Thursday, the 27th, at about 7 o'clock, Giuseppe Orefice and Carlo Marotta went to the place where was the stack of straw, which they found had been burned by the priests D. Girolamo Guarino and Giuseppe Lindtner, in order that they might more easily search for the missing particles: they found also Giuseppe Piscopo, Carmine Esposito, and Palmiero Novello, prostrate on the ground and weeping, because they had seen a little light appearing and then disappearing before them several times. When Orefice heard this, he knelt down, and began to recite the acts of faith, hope, and charity: when he had finished he returned with the others to see what the light was, which, according to the deposition of Orefice rose up about four fingers from the earth, and then disappeared as it were in the ground. After this, having put a mark over the place where the light had appeared, so as not to be mistaken, Orefice and Marotta went to inform the priest D. Girolamo Guarino, who came immediately to the place and found many persons kneeling there: he began to search with care about the ground on which the mark had been placed.

At this moment many persons again saw the light; and Guarino, who did not see it, made the sign of the cross upon the ground, and ordered his brother Giuseppe to scoop out the earth on which the stack of straw had stood, on the left of the cross, with a pick-axe which he had in his hand; but he found nothing. However, just as they were thinking of digging in another part, Giuseppe Orefice, who was on his knees all the time, put his hand on the ground, and finding that it was soft and yielding, mentioned it to the Rev. Guarino, who, taking a knife from his brother, stuck it into the ground, on the spot which had been marked with the cross; and when it was at its depth, he heard a noise as if several hosts united together were broken. He drew the knife out of the ground, and with it a little ball of earth, to which he saw many particles were attached. Struck with fear at what

he saw, he cried out in astonishment, "Oh, oh, oh!" and then fainted away; so that, as he himself deposed, his sight failed him, and, losing all power over himself, the knife, with the ball of earth and the particles, fell from his hand.

As soon as Guarino recovered his senses, he put the particles in a white linen handkerchief, covered them up, and laid them in the hole in which they had been found; for, on account of the trembling which had come over him, and especially in the arms, he was not able to stand upright. The parish priest, being informed of what had happened, came quickly to the spot, where he found all kneeling before this hidden treasure; and having taken better information of the event, he went back to his church, and sent a canopy, veil, a number of wax-tapers, and a chalice, in which the sacred particles were put. The assistants spread the veil over a little table covered with silk, on which the Blessed Sacrament reposed; round this a number of persons knelt with lighted torches, and many people arrived, not only from the town, but also from the surrounding villages, with their priests; all of whom shed tears of tender devotion. In the meantime the priest Lindtner and Signor Giuseppe Guarino went off to find Monsignor the Vicar-General, and returned about ten o'clock, with orders to carry in procession the particles that had been found to the parish church of S. Pietro à Paterno. They did so, and along the way they all sang, praising and thanking Almighty God. As soon as they arrived at the church, benediction was given with the chalice, in the midst of the tears and cries of devotion of the whole people, who could not leave off weeping and thanking the Lord for the great consolation they had received.

We read in the history of olden times of many such-like prodigies in confirmation of the truth of the Most Holy Sacrament. I myself, in my *History of Heresies*, have related many examples on this matter in the time of the impious Wickliffe, who was the first of modern heretics to deny the truth of this venerable Sacrament. At that time Almighty God was pleased to work many miracles to confound their incredulity, which I have inserted in the book just mentioned (chap. 10, n. 36, 37). Nevertheless, there

are not wanting certain critical spirits who altogether refuse to believe these ancient accounts, and say, "But who saw them?" Now, if such a one should doubt the fact which I have now related, and which was proved with such exactness in the Archiepiscopal court of Naples, he can easily certify himself of the truth of it by going to the town of St. Pietro à Paterno, which is not far from the city, where he will find many lay persons and ecclesiastics who will assure him that they beheld with their own eyes the prodigies here related.

For the rest ; let others say what they please, for my own part I hold the fact to be more than certain, and therefore I wished to make it known by publishing an account of it. It is true that the miracle here described does not call for any other than mere human faith ; nevertheless, of all such facts grounded on human faith, I do not know if there be one that is more deserving of belief than this that I have related, considering the extreme care with which the information was taken by the Neapolitan court, and the evidence, not of credulous women, but of seventeen men, lay and ecclesiastics, who judicially deposed on oath all that they had seen with their own eyes. All these circumstances, which are so many marks of truth, make the fact more than morally certain. Hence I hope that all those who read this account will not be disinclined to believe it, but will do what they can to make it known for the glory of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

PART II.

SPIRITUAL TREATISES,

ETC.

NOVENA OF THE HOLY SPIRIT;

CONSISTING OF

MEDITATIONS FOR EACH DAY OF THE NOVENA, BEGINNING
WITH THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

THE Novena of the Holy Spirit is the chief of all the Novenas, because it was the first that was ever celebrated, and that by the holy Apostles and the most holy Mary in the supper-room, and distinguished by so many remarkable wonders and gifts; principally by the gift of the same Holy Spirit, a gift merited for us by the Passion of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Himself made this known to us, when He said to His disciples, that if He did not die, He could not send us the Holy Ghost: "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (St. John xvi. 7). We know well by faith that the Holy Ghost is the love that the Father and the Eternal Word bear one to the other; and therefore the gift of love, which the Lord infuses into our souls, and which is the greatest of all gifts, is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v. 5). In this Novena, therefore, we must consider, above all, the great value of divine love, in order that we may desire to obtain it, and endeavour, by devout exercises, and specially by prayer, to be made partakers of it, since God has promised it to him who asks for it with humility: "Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him" (St. Luke xi. 13).

MEDITATION I.

LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART.

God had ordered, in the ancient law, that there should be a fire kept continually burning on His altar: "The fire on the altar shall always burn" (Lev. vi. 12). St. Gregory says, that the altars of God are our hearts, where He desires that the fire of His divine love should always be burning; and therefore the Eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us His Son Jesus Christ, to save us by His death, would also give us the Holy Ghost, that He might dwell in our souls, and keep them constantly on fire with love. And Jesus Himself declared, that He had come into the world on purpose to inflame our hearts with this holy fire, and that He desired nothing more than to see it kindled: "I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (St. Luke xii. 49.) Forgetting, therefore, the injuries and ingratitude He received from men on this earth, when He had ascended into heaven He sent down upon us the Holy Spirit. O most loving Redeemer, Thou dost, then, love us as well in Thy sufferings and ignominies as in Thy kingdom of glory! Hence it was that the Holy Ghost chose to appear in the supper-room under the form of tongues of fire: "And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire" (Acts ii. 3). And hence the Church teaches us to pray: "May the Holy Ghost, we beseech Thee, O Lord, inflame us with that fire which our Lord Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth, and which He ardently desired should be enkindled." This was the holy fire which has inflamed the saints to do such great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to deprive themselves of all earthly goods, and to embrace with delight even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle, and never says, 'It is enough.' The soul that loves God, the more she does for her Beloved, the more she desires to do, in order to please Him, and to attract to herself His affections the more. This holy fire is enkindled by mental prayer: "In my meditation a fire shall flame out" (Ps. xxxviii. 4).² If, therefore, we desire to burn with love towards God, let

us love prayer; this is the blessed furnace in which this divine ardour is enkindled.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God, hitherto I have done nothing for Thee, who hast done such great things for me! Alas! my coldness deserves that Thou shouldst "vomit me out of Thy mouth." O Holy Spirit, I beseech Thee, 'warm what is cold,' deliver me from this coldness, and enkindle within me an earnest desire of pleasing Thee. I now renounce all my worldly gratifications; and I will rather die than give Thee the least displeasure. Thou didst appear in the shape of fiery tongues; I consecrate my tongue to Thee, that it may never offend Thee more. Thou didst give it me, O my God, to praise Thee with; and I have made use of it to offend Thee, and to draw others also into sinning against Thee. I repent of it with my whole soul. Oh, for the love of Jesus Christ, who, during His life on earth, honoured Thee so much with His tongue, grant that I also may from this day forth honour Thee constantly, by celebrating Thy praises, by frequently invoking Thy aid, and by speaking of Thy goodness and the infinite love which Thou deservest! I love Thee, my Sovereign Good, I love Thee, O God of love! O Mary, thou art the most dear spouse of the Holy Ghost, obtain for me this holy fire!

MEDITATION II.

LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL.

One of the greatest evils which the sin of Adam has produced in us, is that darkening of our reason by means of the passions which cloud our mind. Oh, how miserable is that soul which allows itself to be ruled by any passion! Passion is, as it were, a vapour, a veil which prevents our seeing the truth. How can he fly from evil, who does not know what is evil? Besides, this obscurity increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Spirit, who is called ('most blessed light,' is He who not

only inflames our hearts to love Him, through His divine splendour, but also dispels our darkness, and shows us the vanity of earthly things, the value of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the price of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love which He deserves, and the immense love which He bears us. "The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 14). A man who is absorbed in the pleasures of earth knows little of these truths, and therefore, unfortunate that he is, he loves what he ought to hate, and hates what he ought to love. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi exclaimed: "O love not known! O love not loved!" And therefore St. Teresa said that God is not loved because He is not known. Hence the saints were always seeking light from God: "Send forth Thy light; illuminate my darkness; open Thou my eyes." Yes: because without light we cannot avoid precipices, nor can one find God.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O holy and divine Spirit, I believe that Thou art really God, but one only God with the Father and the Son. I adore Thee, and acknowledge Thee as the giver of all those lights by which Thou hast made known to me the evil which I have committed in offending Thee, and the obligation which I am under of loving Thee. I thank Thee for them, and I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. I have deserved that Thou shouldst abandon me in my darkness; but I see that Thou hast not yet forsaken me. Continue, O eternal Spirit, to enlighten me, and to make me know more and more Thy infinite goodness; and give me strength to love Thee for the future with my whole heart. Add grace to grace; so that I may be sweetly overcome, and constrained to love none other but Thee. I implore this of Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ. I love Thee, my Sovereign Good; I love Thee more than myself. I desire to be entirely Thine; do Thou accept me, and suffer me not to be separated from Thee any more. O Mary, my Mother, do thou always assist me by thy intercession!

MEDITATION III.

LOVE IS A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES.

Love is also called a living fountain: 'a living fountain, fire, and charity.' Our Blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman: "But he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever" (St. John iv. 13). Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; he who loves God really with his whole heart neither seeks nor desires any thing else; because in God he finds every good. Wherefore, satisfied with God, he often joyfully exclaims, 'My God and my All!' My God, Thou art my whole good. But, however, the Almighty complains that many souls go about seeking for fleeting and miserable pleasures from creatures, and leave Him, who is the infinite Good and fountain of all joy: "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. ii. 13). Wherefore God, who loves us, and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all: "If any thirst, let him come to Me" (St. John vii. 37). He who desires to be happy, let him come to Me; and I will give him the Holy Ghost, who will make him blessed both in this life and the next. "He that believeth in Me" (He goes on to say), "as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (St. John vii. 38). He, therefore, that believes in Jesus Christ, and loves Him, shall be enriched with so much grace, that from his heart (the heart, that is, the will, is the belly of the soul) shall flow many fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only serve to preserve his own life, but also to give life to others. And this water was the Holy Ghost, the substantial love which Jesus Christ promised to send us from heaven after His ascension: "Now this He said of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in Him; for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (St. John vii. 39). The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains every good for us in virtue of the promise, "Ask,

and you shall receive." We are blind, poor, and weak; but prayer obtains for us light, strength, and abundance of grace. Theodoret said: 'Prayer, though but one, can do all things.' He who prays receives all he wishes. God desires to give us His graces; but He will have us pray for them.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

"Lord, give me this water." O my Jesus, with the Samaritan woman, I beseech Thee, give me this water of Thy love, which may make me forget the earth, to live only for Thee, O amiable, infinite One. 'Water that which is dry.' My soul is a barren soil, which produces nothing but the weeds and thorns of sin; oh, do Thou water it with Thy grace, so that it may bring forth some fruits to Thy glory, before death takes me out of this world. O Fountain of living water, O Sovereign Good, how many times have I left Thee for the puddles of this earth, which have deprived me of Thy love! Oh, would that I had died before I offended Thee! But for the future I will seek after nothing but Thee, O my God. Do Thou assist me, and enable me to be faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, do thou keep me always under thy protection!

MEDITATION IV.

LOVE IS A DEW WHICH FERTILIZES.

Thus does Holy Church teach us to pray: 'May the infusion of the Holy Ghost cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the interior sprinkling of His dew.' Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls: these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Spirit produces. Love is also called dew, because it cools the heart of bad passions and of temptations. Therefore the Holy Ghost is also called refreshment and cooling in the heat: 'In heat refreshment and pleasing coolness.' This dew descends into our hearts in the time of prayer. A quarter of an hour's prayer is

sufficient to appease every passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it may be: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me" (Cant. ii. 4). Holy meditation is this cellar where love is set in order, so that we love our neighbour as ourselves, and God above every thing. He who loves God loves prayer; and he that loves not prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O Holy and Divine Spirit, I will no longer live to myself; but I will spend all the days that remain for me in this life in loving Thee and pleasing Thee. Therefore I beseech Thee to grant me the gift of prayer. Do Thou descend into my heart, and teach me to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to leave it off through weariness in times of aridity; and give me the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the grace constantly to pray to Thee, and to use those prayers which are dearest to Thy Sacred Heart. I was once lost through my sins; but I see, from all the kindnesses I have received from Thee, that Thou wilt that I should be saved and become a saint; and I desire to become a saint to give Thee pleasure, and that I may love Thy infinite goodness more and more. I love Thee, O my Sovereign Good, my Love, my All; and because I love Thee I give myself entirely to Thee. O Mary, my hope, do thou protect me!

MEDITATION V.

LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES.

Love is also called, 'in labour rest, in mourning comfort.' Love is repose that refreshes; because the principal office of love is to unite the will of the lover to that of the beloved one. To a soul that loves God, in every affront that it receives, in every sorrow that it endures, in every loss that happens to it, the knowledge that it is the will

of its Beloved that it should suffer these trials is enough to comfort it. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations by merely saying, This is the will of my God. This is that peace which surpasses all the pleasure of sense: "The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7). St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, by merely saying, "The will of God," was always filled with joy.

In this life every one must carry his cross; but St. Teresa says, that the cross is heavy for him that drags it, not for him that embraces it. Thus our Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal: "He woundeth, and cureth," as said Job (ch. v. 18). The Holy Spirit, by His sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and pleasant: "Yea, Lord; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (St. Matt. x. 26). Thus ought we to say in all adversities that happen to us: "So be it done, Lord, because so hath it pleased Thee." And when the fear of any temporal evil that may befall us alarms us, let us always say: "Do what Thou wilt, my God; whatever Thou doest, I accept it all from henceforth." And thus it is a very good thing to offer oneself constantly during the day to God, as did St. Teresa.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God, how often, for the sake of doing my own will, have I opposed myself to Thy will and despised it! I regret this evil more than every other evil. O Lord, from this day forward I will love Thee with my whole heart: "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." Tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do, I will do it all. Thy will shall be my only desire, my only love. O Holy Spirit, help my weakness. Thou art goodness itself; how can I love any other but Thee? Oh, do Thou draw all my affections to Thyself by the sweetness of Thy holy love. I renounce every thing, to give myself entirely to Thee. Do Thou accept me and help me. O Mary, my Mother, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VI.

LOVE IS THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US STRENGTH.

"Love is strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6). As there is no created strength that can resist death, so there is no difficulty for a loving soul which love cannot overcome. When there is question of pleasing its Beloved, love conquers all,—losses, contempt, and sorrow: "Nothing is so hard, but that the fire of love can conquer it." This is the most certain mark whereby to know if a soul really loves God, if it is as faithful in love when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. St. Francis of Sales said, that "God is quite as amiable when He chastises as when He consoles us, because He does all for love." Indeed, when He strikes us most in this life, then it is that He loves us most. St. John Chrysostom esteemed St. Paul in chains more fortunate than St. Paul rapt up into the third heaven. Hence the holy martyrs, in the midst of their torments, rejoiced and thanked the Lord, as for the greatest favour that could fall to their lot, that of having to suffer for His love. And other saints, where there were wanting tyrants to afflict them, became their own executioners, by the penances which they inflicted upon themselves in order to please God. St. Augustine says, that "For that which men love, either no labour is felt, or the labour itself is loved."

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O God of my soul, I say that I love Thee; and yet what do I do for Thy love? Nothing. This shows, therefore, that either I do not love Thee, or I love Thee too little. Send me therefore, O my Jesus, Thy Holy Spirit, that He may come and give me strength to suffer for Thy love, and to do something for the love of Thee before death overtakes me. O my beloved Redeemer, let me not die cold and ungrateful as I have hitherto been to Thee. Grant me strength to love suffering, after so many sins whereby I have deserved hell. O my God, who art all goodness and love, Thou desirest to dwell in my heart,

from which I have so often expelled Thee; come, then, dwell within it, take possession of it, and make it entirely Thine. I love Thee, O my Lord; and if I love Thee, Thou art already with me, as St. John assures me: "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him" (1 St. John iv. 16). Since, therefore, Thou art with me, increase the flames, increase the chains, so that I may neither seek nor love any thing else but Thee; and thus bound, may never be separated from Thy love. I desire to be Thine, O my Jesus, and entirely Thine. O Mary, my Queen and Advocate, obtain for me love and perseverance!

MEDITATION VII.

LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS.

The Holy Ghost is called 'Sweet Guest of the soul.' This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love Him, when He said: "If you love Me, I will pray My Father, and He will send you the Holy Spirit, that He may always dwell in you. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever" (St. John xiv. 15, 16). For the Holy Spirit never forsakes a soul, if He is not driven away from it: 'He does not forsake, unless He be first forsaken.'

God, then, dwells in a soul that loves Him; but He declares that He is not satisfied if we do not love Him with our whole heart. St. Augustine tells us, that the Roman senate would not admit Jesus Christ into the number of their gods, because they said that He was a proud god, who would have none other beloved but Himself. And so it is: He will have no rivals in the heart that loves Him; and when He sees that He is not the only object loved, He is jealous (so to say), according to what St. James writes, of those creatures who divide with Him the heart which He desires to have all to Himself: "Do you think the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet

which dwelleth in you?" (St. James iv. 5.) In short, as St. Jerome says, Jesus is jealous, '*Zelotypus est Jesus.*' Hence the heavenly Spouse praises that soul which, like the turtle-dove, lives in solitude and hidden from the world: "Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle-doves" (Cant. i. 9). Because He does not choose that the world should take a part of that love which He desires to have all to Himself, therefore He also praises His Spouse by calling her "a garden enclosed"; "My sister, My spouse, is a garden enclosed" (Cant. iv. 12). A garden closed against all earthly love. Do we doubt that Jesus deserves our whole love? 'He gave Himself wholly to thee,' says St. Chrysostom; 'He left nothing for Himself.' He has given thee all His Blood and His Life; there remains nothing more for Him to give thee.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God, I see that Thou desirest to have me entirely for Thine own. I have oftentimes driven Thee from my soul, and yet Thou hast not disdained to return to me and re-unite Thyself to me again. Oh, do Thou now take possession of my whole self. I give myself this day entirely to Thee; accept of me, O my Jesus, and let me never for the future live one moment deprived of Thy love. Thou seekest me, and I seek none other but Thee. Thou desirest my soul, and my soul desires none but Thee. Thou lovest me, and I love Thee; and since Thou lovest me, bind me to Thyself, so that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Queen of heaven, I trust in thee!

MEDITATION VIII.

LOVE IS A BOND WHICH BINDS.

As the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond which binds the Father to the Eternal Word, so He also unites the soul with God. 'Charity is a virtue,' says St. Augustine, 'uniting us with God.' Hence, full of joy, St. Laurence Justinian exclaims: O love, thy

bond has such strength, that it is able to bind even God, and unite Him to our souls: "O love, how strong is thy bond, which could bind God!" The bonds of the world are bonds of death; but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation: "Her bonds are a healthful binding" (Eccles. vi. 31). Yes, because the bonds of God by means of love unite us to God, who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ men fled away from God, and being attached to the earth, refused to unite themselves to their Creator; but the loving God has drawn them to Himself by the bonds of love, as He promised by the prophet Osee: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love" (ch. xi. 4). These bands are the benefits, the lights, the calls to His love, the promises of Paradise, which He makes to us; but above all, the gift which He has bestowed upon us of Jesus Christ in the Sacrifice of the Cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and finally, the gift of His Holy Spirit. Therefore the prophet exclaims, "Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Is. lvi. 2). O my soul, thou who art created for heaven, loose thyself from the bonds of earth, and unite thyself to God by the bonds of holy love: "Have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Coloss. iii. 14). Love is a bond which unites with herself all other virtues, and makes the soul perfect. "Love, and do what you will," said St. Augustine. Love God, and do what thou wilt; because he who loves God tries to avoid causing any displeasure to his Beloved, and seeks in all things to please Him.

AFFECTIONS AND PRAYERS.

My dearest Jesus, how much hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee, and how much hath it cost Thee to gain to Thyself my love! Ah, I should be too ungrateful if I loved Thee little, or divided my heart between Thy creatures and Thyself, after Thou hast given me Thy Blood and Thy Life. I will detach myself from every thing, and in Thee alone will I place all my affections. But I am weak in carrying out this my desire; O Thou who hast inspired me with it, do Thou give me strength to execute it. Pierce my poor soul, O dearest Jesus, with the sweet

dart of Thy love, so that I may ever languish with desire of Thee, and be dissolved with the love of Thee; that I may seek Thee alone, desire only Thee, and find none but Thee. My Jesus, I desire Thee, and Thee alone. Make me repeat continually in this life, and specially at the hour of my death, 'Thee alone do I desire, and nothing else.' O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me, that from henceforth I may desire nothing but God!

MEDITATION IX.

LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD.

Love is that treasure of which the Gospel says that we must leave all to obtain it; yes, because love makes us partakers of the friendship of God: "An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God" (Wisd. vii. 14). O man, says St. Augustine, wherefore, then, goest thou about seeking for good things? seek that one good alone in which all other good things are contained. But we cannot find God, who is this Sovereign Good, if we do not forsake the things of the earth. St. Teresa writes, 'Detach thy heart from creatures, and thou shalt find God.' He that finds God finds all that he can desire: "Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Ps. cxviii. 4). The human heart is constantly seeking after good things that may render it happy; but if it seeks them from creatures, how much soever it may acquire, it will never be satisfied with them; but if it seeks God alone, God will satisfy all its desires. Who are the happiest people in this world, if it be not the saints? And why? Because they desire and seek only God. A certain prince, as he was going out hunting, saw a solitary who was running about in the forest, and asked him what he was doing in that desert. The solitary replied, "And thou, O prince, what art thou seeking?" The prince said, "I am going out in search of wild beasts." "And I," said the hermit, "am going out in search of God."

The tyrant offered gold and gems to St. Clement, in

order to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ; the saint exclaimed, with a sigh, 'Alas, is God put into competition with a little dirt? Blessed is he who knows this treasure of divine love, and strives to obtain it. He who obtains it will of his own accord divest himself of every thing else, that he may have nothing else but God.' 'When the house is on fire,' says St. Francis of Sales, 'all the goods are thrown out of the windows.' And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, used to say, that love is a thief, which robs us of all earthly affections; so that we can say, 'And what else do I desire, but Thee alone, O my Lord!'

AFFECTIIONS AND PRAYERS.

O my God, hitherto I have not sought Thee, but myself and my own pleasures; and for the sake of these I have turned my back upon Thee, my Sovereign Good. But I am comforted by these words of Jeremias, "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25). They tell me that Thou art all goodness towards him who seeks Thee. My beloved Saviour, I know the evil that I have committed in forsaking Thee, and I repent of it with my whole heart. I know that Thou art an infinite treasure. I will not abuse this light; I will forsake all, and choose Thee for my only love. My God, my Love, my All, I love Thee, I desire Thee, I sigh after Thee. Come, O Holy Spirit, and destroy in me by Thy sacred fire every affection which has not Thee for its object. Grant that I may be all Thine, and that I may conquer every thing to please Thee. O Mary, my Advocate and Mother, do thou help me by thy prayers!

MEDITATION X.

ON THE MEANS OF LOVING GOD AND OF BECOMING A SAINT.

The more we love God, the more holy do we become. St. Francis Borgia says, that it is prayer that introduces divine love into the human heart; and it is mortification that withdraws the heart from the earth, and renders it capable of receiving this holy fire. The more there is of

the earth in the heart, the less room there is for holy love: "Wisdom is not to be found in the land of them that live in delights" (Job xxxiii. 12, 13). Hence the saints have always sought to mortify as much as possible their self-love and their senses. The saints are few; but we must live with the few, if we will be saved with the few: 'Live with the few,' writes St. John Climacus, 'if you would reign with the few.' And St. Bernard says, 'That cannot be perfect which is not singular.' He who would lead a perfect life must lead a singular life. But before all, in order to become saints, it is necessary to have the desire to be saints; we must have the desire and the resolution. Some are always desiring, but they never begin to put their hands to the work. 'Of these irresolute souls,' says St. Teresa, 'the devil has no fear.' On the other hand, the saint said, 'God is a friend of generous souls.' The devil tries to make it appear to us to be pride to think of doing great things for God. It would indeed be pride in us, if we thought of doing them trusting in our own strength; but it is not pride to resolve to become saints trusting in God, and saying, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." We must therefore be of good courage, make strong resolutions, and begin. Prayer can do every thing. What we cannot do by our own strength, we shall do easily with the help of God, who has promised to give us whatever we ask of Him: "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (St. John xv. 7).

AFFECTIIONS AND PRAYERS.

My dearest Redeemer, Thou desirest my love, and commandest me to love Thee with my whole heart. Yes, my Jesus, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart. O my God, I will say to Thee, trusting in Thy mercy, my past sins do not make me fear, because I now hate them and detest them above every other evil; and I know that Thou dost forget the offences of a soul that is penitent and loves Thee. Indeed, because I have offended Thee more than others, I will also love Thee more than others, with the help that I hope to obtain from Thee. O my Lord, Thou desirest that I should be a saint; and I desire to become a

saint to please Thee. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness. To Thee do I give myself entirely. Thou art my only Good, my only Love. Accept of me, O my Beloved, and make me entirely Thine, and suffer me not to offend Thee any more. Grant that I may be wholly consumed for Thee, as Thou hast wholly consumed Thyself for me. O Mary, the most loving and most beloved spouse of the Holy Spirit, obtain for me love and fidelity!

ON THE LOVE OF GOD,

AND MEANS FOR ACQUIRING IT.

1. Our good God, because He loves us much, desires to be loved much by us; and therefore He has not only called us to love Him by so many invitations repeated again and again in the Holy Scriptures, and by so many blessings both general and individual, but He would also oblige us to love Him by an express commandment: and He threatens those who love Him not with hell; while to those who do love Him He promises Paradise. His will is, that no one is lost, but that all attain salvation, as St. Peter and St. Paul most clearly teach: "Who will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4): "He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 St. Pet. iii. 9). But since God wishes all men to be saved, why has He created hell? He did so, not to see us damned, but in order to be loved by us. If He had not created hell, who in the whole world would love Him? If with hell, existing as it really does, the greater part of men choose rather to be damned than to love Almighty God, who, I repeat, would love Him were there no hell? And therefore the Lord threatens those who will not love Him with an eternal punishment; so that they who will not love Him out of love may at least love Him by force, being constrained to do so through fear of falling into hell.

2. O God, how fortunate and honoured would that man esteem himself to whom his king should say, 'Love me because I love you!' An earthly monarch would take good care not to humble himself to such an extent as to

ask one of his subjects for his love; but God, who is infinite goodness, the Lord of all, almighty, all-wise, in a word, God, who merits an infinite love, God, who has enriched us with spiritual and temporal gifts, does not disdain to ask of us our love. He exhorts us and commands us to love Him, and He cannot obtain it. What does He ask of each one of us but to be loved? "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God . . . and love Him?" (Deut. x. 12.) It was for this end that the Son of God came to converse with us even upon earth, as He Himself said: "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (St. Luke xii. 49.) Observe these last words,—“and what will I but that it be kindled?”—as if it were that a God, who possesses in Himself infinite happiness, could not be happy without seeing Himself loved by us: “As it is,” says St. Thomas, “He could not be happy without thee.”

3. We cannot doubt, then, that God loves us, and loves us exceedingly; and because He loves us exceedingly, He wishes us to love Him with our whole heart: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” And then He adds: “And these words shall be in thy heart . . . and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising; and thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house” (Deut. vi. 5-9). We can see in all these words how earnest is the desire which God has to be beloved by each one of us. He wishes that the injunction of loving Him with our whole heart should be imprinted in our heart; and that we may never be unmindful of these words, He wishes us to meditate upon them when we are sitting at home, when we are walking abroad, when we lie down to sleep, and when we awake from it again. He wishes us to hold them in our hands bound up with some significant memento, in order that, wherever we may be, our eyes may ever rest upon them; and hence it was that the Pharisees, taking them only in their literal sense, used, as we are told by St. Mat-

thew, to wear them inscribed on pieces of parchment, not only in their right hands, but upon their foreheads also (St. Matt. xxiii.).

4. St. Gregory of Nyssa exclaims, ‘Blessed is the arrow which carries along with it into the heart the God by whom it is aimed!’ And what the holy father means is this: that when God wounds the heart with an arrow of love, it acts like a flash or ray of special illumination, whereby the soul becomes cognisant of His goodness and of the love which He bears towards her, as also of the desire which He has to possess the love of that soul; whilst at the same moment He Himself comes together with that arrow of His love, He who is the archer being Himself also love: “for,” as St. John says, “God is charity” (1 Ep. iv. 8). And as an arrow remains fixed in the heart which it has wounded, so in like manner does God, when He wounds a soul with His love, come to remain for ever united with that soul which He has wounded. Let us be assured that it is God only who loves us truly. The love of parents, of friends, and of all others who profess to love us, excepting in the case of those who love us solely out of regard for God, is not a true but a self-interested love, and arises from some motive of self-love as the end, for the sake of which we are loved. Yes, O my God, I know full well that it is Thou alone who lovest me, and desirest for me every good, not for any selfish interests of Thine own, but solely out of Thine own goodness, and out of the pure affection which Thou dost bear towards me: whilst I am so ungrateful as to have caused no one so much displeasure and so many griefs as I have done to Thee, who hast loved me so much. O my Jesus, do not permit me to be ungrateful to Thee any more. Thou hast loved me truly, and I wish to love Thee truly in whatever of this life may still be mine. With St. Catherine of Genoa, I say to Thee: “My Love, no more sins, no more sins;” I wish to love Thee only, and nought besides.

5. St. Bernard says, that a soul which truly loves God “cannot will any thing but what God wills.” Let us pray God to wound us with His holy love: for a soul thus wounded has neither the faculty nor the power to have a

will for any thing but that which God wills, and divests itself of every desire arising out of self-love. This self-spoliation, moreover, together with the giving oneself unreservedly to God, is the arrow by which He declares that He Himself is wounded by the soul; as He said to the sacred spouse in the Canticles: "Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse" (Cant. iv. 9).

6. How beautifully does St. Bernard express himself on this subject when he says: 'Let us learn to dart our hearts at God!' When a soul gives herself up wholly and unreservedly to God, it is as if she darted her own heart like a spear towards the Heart of God, who declares Himself to be, as it were, captivated and taken prisoner by the soul which has made over to Him the gift of herself in full. This is the employment of such souls in the prayers which they offer; 'they dart their hearts at God'; they give themselves wholly up to God; and they are ever renewing that gift in these or similar ejaculations of love:

'My God and my All! my God, I wish for Thee, and for nought besides.

O Lord, I give myself wholly to Thee; and if I know not how to make the gift as perfect as I ought, do Thou take the management of it Thyself.

And what would I love, O my Jesus, if I love not Thee, who hast died for me?

'Draw me after Thee! my Saviour, drag me out of the mire of my sins, and draw me after Thee.

Bind me, O Lord, and fetter me with the chains of Thy love, that I may never leave Thee more.

I wish to be all Thine own. Lord, hast Thou understood me? I wish to be wholly, wholly Thine: it is for Thee to make me so.

And what would I have but Thee, my Love, my All?

Since Thou hast called me to Thy love, enable me to please Thee as Thou dost desire.

And what would I love but Thee, who art infinite goodness, deserving infinite love?

Thou hast inspired me with the desire of being wholly Thine: oh, make the work complete!

And what would I have in this world but Thee, who art the Sovereign Good?

I give myself to Thee without reserve: oh, accept me, and give me the strength to be faithful unto Thee till death!

I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly for all eternity.

Jesus, my true, my only Love,
I wish for nought but Thee:
Behold me all Thine own, my God;
Do what Thou wilt with me.

Whoever says this little canticle from the heart causes joy in Paradise.

7. Blessed, in short, is that soul which can truly say, "My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16). My God has given Himself wholly to me, and I have given myself wholly to Him; I am no longer my own; I belong entirely to my God. St. Bernard says, that whosoever can speak thus from his heart, would most readily and willingly embrace all the pains of hell (provided that he could do so without separating himself from God) rather than behold himself, even for one single moment, disunited from God: 'It would be more tolerable to such an one to suffer hell than to withdraw from Him.' Oh, what a beautiful treasure is the treasure of Divine love! He who possesses it is happy indeed: let him take every care, and make use of all the means which are necessary to preserve and increase it; while he who does not yet possess it ought to employ every means in order to acquire it. Let us now see what are the means most necessary and proper for its acquisition and preservation.

8. The first of these is the detachment of oneself from earthly affections. In a heart which is full of earth there is no room to be found for the love of God; and the more the earthly element predominates, so much the less does the Divine love bear sway. Wherefore, he who desires to have his heart filled with Divine love, should study to remove out of it all that is of earth. In order to become saints, we must follow the example of St. Paul, who, that he might gain the love of Jesus Christ, despised as so much dung all

the good things of this world: "I count all things as dung, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. iii. 8). Oh, let us pray the Holy Spirit to enkindle within us His holy love; for then we too shall despise and reckon as mere vanity, smoke, and dirt all this world's riches, pleasures, honours, and distinctions, for the sake of which mankind in general involve themselves so miserably in destruction.

9. Ah! whenever holy love enters into the heart, it no longer regards as of any value all that the world holds in estimation: "If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing" (Cant. viii. 7). St. Francis of Sales observes, that when a house is in flames the goods are all thrown out through the windows; meaning to say, that when the heart is on fire with Divine love, a man needs not the preachings and exhortations of a spiritual father, but of his own accord sets himself to work to divest himself of the good things of this world, of its honours, its riches, and of all earthly things, in order that he may love nothing but God. St. Catherine of Genoa used to say that she did not love God for the sake of His gifts, but that she loved the gifts of God in order that she might love Him the more.

10. Gilbert observes, that it is hard and intolerable to a heart which loves God to divide its affections between Him and creatures, by loving at one and the same time God and creatures too: "Oh, how hard it is for the lover to divide his heart between Christ and the world!" St. Bernard says, that the Divine love is, on the other hand, insolent: "Love is insolent," insolent, because God will not suffer that, in a heart which loves, there should be others to share with Him in its love, wishing, as He does, to have it all for Himself. Is it, then, that God claims too much, in wishing that a soul should love Him, and Him alone? "The Sovereign Loveliness," observes St. Bonaventure, "ought to be loved exclusively." Such an one as God, whose loveliness and goodness is infinite and worthy of an infinite love, has a just claim to be alone in His possession of the love of a heart created by Himself for the express purpose that it should make Him the object of its love: while, in order that He might be loved exclusively, He has

gone so far as to expend Himself wholly for that heart, as St. Bernard says, when speaking of himself and of the love which Jesus Christ had borne towards him: "He was utterly spent for my benefit." What each one of us can most truly say, when thinking of Jesus Christ, is, that for each one of us He has sacrificed all His life and all His Blood, dying upon a cross, consumed by pain; and that although His death be past, He has bequeathed to us His Body and His Blood, His soul and His whole Self in the Sacrament of the Altar, that it may be the meat and drink of our souls, and that we may each of us be united to Himself.

11. Happy is the soul, as St. Gregory observes, which has arrived at a state wherein every thing is intolerable which is not the God whom it exclusively loves. "Whatever does not speak of the God whom it so intensely loves is intolerable." We must, then, be on our guard against setting our affections on creatures, lest they steal from us a portion of the love which God wishes to be wholly for Himself. And even when such affections are right, as in the case of those which we feel towards parents or friends, we should never forget the saying of St. Philip Neri, that whatever love we entertain for creatures is so much taken away from God.

12. We ought, therefore, to endeavour to make ourselves "gardens enclosed," as the Sacred Spouse in the Canticles was styled by her Lord: "My Spouse is a garden enclosed" (Cant. iv. 12). The title of "a garden enclosed" applies to that soul which keeps itself closed up against the entrance of all mere earthly affections. Whenever, therefore, any creature seeks to enter in and to lay hold of a portion of our heart, we must utterly refuse it admission; and then we ought to turn to Jesus Christ, and say to Him: My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me. I do not wish to love aught but Thee: "Thou art the God of my heart; and God is my portion for ever." My God, Thou alone art the Lord of my heart, and my only love. And on this account let us not cease from praying continually to God, that He would bestow upon us the gift of His pure love; since, as St. Francis of Sales observes, "The pure love of

God consumes all that is not God, to transform every thing into itself.")

13. Meditation on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the second means for acquiring the Divine love. On this subject the reader can refer to my book, which was published a short time since, entitled *Reflections on the Passion of Jesus Christ*, where he will find a detailed examination of the sufferings which our Saviour underwent in His Passion. As for the rest, it is certain that the fact of Jesus Christ being so little loved in the world arises from the negligence and ingratitude of mankind, and from their not considering, at least occasionally, how much He has suffered for us, and the love wherewith He suffered for us. ("To mankind it has appeared foolish," as St. Gregory observes, "that God should die for us.") It seems folly, says the Saint, that God should have been willing to die in order to save us miserable slaves: but, nevertheless, it is of faith that He has done so. "He has loved us, and delivered Himself for us." And He has willed to shed all His blood, in order to wash away our sins therewith: "He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood" (Apoc. i. 5).

14. St. Bonaventure says, "My God, so much hast Thou loved me, that through Thy love for me, Thou dost seem to have gone so far as even to have hated Thyself." Besides, He has yet further willed that He Himself should be our food in Holy Communion. And here the angelic doctor St. Thomas, speaking of this Most Holy Sacrament, says, that God has so humbled Himself with us, that it is as if He were our servant, and each of us His God: "as though He were their servant, and each of them were God's God."

15. Hence it is that the Apostle says, "for the charity of Christ presseth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). St. Paul says that the love which Jesus Christ has borne us constrains us, and in a certain sense forces us to love Him. O my God, what is there that men will not do out of their love for some creature on which they have set their affections! And how little is their love for One who is, moreover,

God; whose goodness and loveliness is infinite, and who has even gone so far as to die upon a cross for each one of us! Ah, let us all follow the example of the Apostle, who said: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14). So spoke the holy Apostle: and what greater glory can I hope for in the world than that of having had a God to sacrifice His blood and life out of His love for me? And this is what every one who has faith must say; and if he has faith, how shall it be possible for him to love any other than God? O my God! how can a soul, contemplating Jesus crucified, as, suspended on three nails, He hangs from those same wounds of His in His hands and feet, and dies of sheer anguish, through His love for us, not perceive itself drawn, and, as it were, constrained to love Him with all its powers?

16. The third means of gaining a perfect love of God, is the bringing of our own will into uniformity with the Divine Will in all things. St. Bernard says, that he who loves God perfectly 'cannot will any thing excepting that which God wills.'⁵ There are many who profess themselves to be thoroughly resigned to whatever God wills; but when afterwards any adverse circumstance or any troublesome infirmity befalls them, they cannot retain their peace of mind. It is not so with souls which are in a state of true uniformity. They say, "Thus it pleases, or thus it has pleased, Him whom I love," and they are immediately at rest. ("To holy love," says St. Bonaventure, "all things are sweet.") These souls know that every thing which happens in the world is either ordered or permitted by God; consequently, in all that comes to pass, they humbly bow down their head, and live contented with what God assigns. And although it be frequently the case that He does not will that those who persecute and injure us should do so, yet He nevertheless wills, for wise ends, that we should suffer with patience the persecution or the injury by which we are afflicted.

17. St. Catherine of Genoa used to say, "If God had placed me in the depths of hell, I would sincerely have said, It is good for us to be here." I would have said,

It is enough for me that I am here by the will of Him whom I love, who loves me more than all others do, and knows what is best for me. Sweet is the repose of those who repose in the arms of the Divine will.

18. St. Teresa says, the grand thing to be acquired by one who practises the habit of prayer is the conformity of his own will with the Divine; for in that consists the highest perfection. Wherefore we must be ever repeating to God that prayer of David: "Teach me to do Thy will" (Ps. cxlii. 9). Lord, since Thou dost wish me to be saved, teach me ever to do Thy will. The most perfect act of love which a soul can perform towards God is that of St. Paul, when, on his conversion, he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.) Lord, tell me what Thou dost desire of me, for I am ready to do it. This act is worth more than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines. This ought to be the object of all our works, desires, and prayers,—the accomplishment of the Divine will. For this we ought to pray our Divine Mother, our patron saints and guardian angels, to obtain for us the grace to fulfil the will of God. And whenever things which are opposed to our self-love befall us, we may then, by one act of resignation, gain treasures of merit. Let us accustom ourselves, on such occasions, to repeat those words which Jesus Himself has, by His own example, taught us: "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (St. John xviii. 11); or again: "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (St. Matt. xi. 26). Lord, thus it hath pleased Thee, and thus it pleases me also. Or again, with holy Job, let us say: "As it hath pleased Thee, Lord, so is it done; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). The venerable Father Avila used to say, that a single "Blessed be God," under adverse circumstances, is worth more than a thousand thanksgivings when things go smoothly. And here we may say again, what has already been said above, beautiful is the repose of those who repose themselves in the arms of the will of God; for then will the declaration of the Holy Spirit be fulfilled in them: "Whatsoever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad" (Prov. xii. 21).

19. The fourth means for becoming enamoured of God is mental prayer. The eternal truths are not discernible by the natural eye, like the things which are visible in this world. They are to be discerned solely by means of meditation and contemplation. Therefore, unless we pause for a certain length of time, in order to consider the eternal truths, and more especially our obligation to love God, on account of His being so deserving of our love, as also for the great blessings which He has conferred upon us, and the love which He has borne us, we shall hardly loose ourselves from the love of creatures, to fix our whole love on God. It is in the time of prayer that God gives us to understand the worthlessness of earthly things, and the value of the good things of heaven; and then it is that He inflames with His love those hearts which do not offer resistance to His calls. There are many, however, who complain that they go to prayer and do not find God; the reason of which is, that they carry with them a heart full of earth. Detach the heart from creatures, says St. Teresa, seek God, and you will find Him: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lam. iii. 25). Therefore, to find God in prayer, the soul must be stripped of its love for the things of earth, and then God will speak to it: "I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart" (Os. ii. 14). But in order to find God, the solitude of the body, as St. Gregory observes, is not enough; that of the heart is necessary too. The Lord one day said to St. Teresa: "I would willingly speak to many souls; but the world makes such a noise in their heart, that My voice cannot make itself heard." ~~At~~ When a detached soul is engaged in prayer, truly does God speak to it, and make it understand the love which He has borne it; and then the soul (as a certain author says), burning with holy love, speaks not; but in that silence, oh, how much does it say! The silence of charity (observes the same writer) says more to God than could be said by the utmost powers of human eloquence: each sigh that it utters is a manifestation of its whole interior. It then seems as if it could not repeat often enough: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

20. The fifth means of attaining to a high degree of Divine love is prayer. We are poor in all things; but if we pray, we are rich in all things; for God has promised to grant the prayer of him who prays to Him. He says: "Ask, and it shall be given to you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). What greater love can one friend show towards another than to say to him, Ask of me what you will, and I will give it you? This is what the Lord says to each one of us. God is Lord of all things. He promises to give us as much as we ask Him for: if, then, we are poor, the fault is our own, because we do not ask Him for the graces of which we stand in need. And it is on this account that mental prayer is morally necessary for all; inasmuch as, when prayer is laid aside, while we are involved in this world's cares, we pay but little attention to the soul; but when we practise it, we discover the wants of the soul, and then ask for the corresponding graces, and obtain them.

21. The whole life of the saints has been one of meditation and prayer; and all the graces by means of which they have become saints have been received by them in answer to their prayers. If, therefore, we would be saved and become saints, we ought ever to stand at the gates of the Divine mercy to beg and pray for, as an alms, all that we stand in need of. We need humility: let us ask for it, and we shall be humble. We need patience under tribulations: let us ask for it, and we shall be patient. The Divine love is what we desire: let us ask for it, and we shall obtain it. "Ask, and it shall be given you," is God's promise, which cannot fail. And Jesus Christ, in order to inspire us with the greater confidence in our prayers, has promised us, that whatever be the graces which we shall ask of the Father in His name, for the sake of either His love or His merits, the Father will give us them all: "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). And in another place He says: "Whatsoever ye shall ask of Me Myself in My name, through My merits, I will grant it: 'If you shall ask Me any thing in My name, that I will do'" (ibid. xiv. 14). Yes; because it is of faith, that

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whatever God can do, that also can Jesus Christ do, who is His Son.

22. Let a soul be as cold as it can be in the Divine love, if it have faith, I know not how it be possible for it not to perceive itself urged to love Jesus Christ, on even the most hasty consideration of what the Holy Scriptures tell us of the love which He has manifested towards us in His Passion, and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. As regards His Passion, we read in Isaiah: "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows" (Is. liii. 4); and in the verse which follows: "But He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins." So that it is of faith, that Jesus Christ has willed to suffer in His own Person pains and afflictions, to set free from them ourselves, to whom they were justly due. And why is it that He has done so, if it be not for the love which He has borne towards us? "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us" (Eph. v. 2), as St. Paul says. And St. John says: "Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood" (Apoc. i. 5). While with respect to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it was Jesus Himself who said to us all, when He instituted it, "Take ye, and eat; this is My Body" (1 Cor. xi. 24). And in another passage: "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 5). How can any one who has faith read this without feeling himself, as it were, forced to love his Redeemer, who, after having sacrificed His Blood and Life out of love for him, has left him His own Body in the Sacrament of the Altar, to be the food of his soul, and the means of uniting him wholly to Himself in Holy Communion?

23. We may add one more brief reflection on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He shows Himself to us on the cross pierced by three nails, with blood issuing from every pore, and agonising in the pangs of death. I ask, why is it that Jesus manifests Himself to us in such a pitiable condition? Is it, perhaps, that we may compassionate Him? No: it is not so much to gain our compassion, as to become the object of our love, that He has reduced Himself to so miserable a state. It ought to have been

a motive more than sufficient to secure our love, had He given us to know that His love for us is from all eternity: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). But seeing that this was not enough for our lukewarmness, the Lord, in order to move us to love Him according to His desires, has willed thus to give us indeed a practical demonstration of the love which He bore towards us, by making us behold Him, covered with wounds, die of anguish, through His love for us, that by means of His sufferings we might understand the immensity and tenderness of the love which He cherishes towards us; as it is so well expressed in these words of St. Paul: "He has loved us, and delivered Himself for us" (Eph. v. 2).

THE WAY TO CONVERSE ALWAYS AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.

TAKEN FROM A SMALL FRENCH WORK, AND ENLARGED BY OTHER SACRED
THOUGHTS, AFFECTIONS, AND EXERCISES OF THE AUTHOR.

1. HOLY Job was struck with wonder to consider our God so devoted in benefiting man, and showing the chief care of His Heart to be, to love man and to make Himself beloved by him. Speaking to the Lord, he exclaims: "What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him, or why dost Thou set Thy Heart upon him?" (Job vii. 17.) Hence it is clearly a mistake to think that great confidence and familiarity in treating with God is a want of reverence to His Infinite Majesty. Thou oughtest indeed, O devout soul, to revere Him in all humility, and abase thyself before Him; specially when thou dost call to mind the unthankfulness and the outrages whereof, in past times, thou hast been guilty. Yet this should not hinder thy treating with Him with the most tender love and confidence in thy power. He is Infinite Majesty; but at the same time He is Infinite Goodness, Infinite Love. In God thou dost possess the Lord most exalted and supreme; but thou hast also Him who loves thee with the greatest possible love. He disdains not, but delights that thou shouldst use towards Him that confidence, that freedom and tenderness which children use towards their mothers. Hear how He invites us to come to His feet, and the caresses He promises to bestow on us: "You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you: as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you" (Is. lxvi. 12, 13). As a mother delights to place her little child upon her knees, and so to feed or to caress

him; with like tenderness does our gracious God delight to treat the souls whom He loves, who have given themselves wholly to Him, and placed all their hopes in His goodness.

2. Consider, thou hast neither friend nor brother, father nor mother, spouse nor lover, who loves thee more than thy God. The Divine Grace is that great treasure whereby we vilest of creatures, we servants, become the dear friends of our Creator Himself: "For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God" (Wisd. vii. 14). For this purpose He increases our confidence; He "emptied Himself," and brought Himself to nought, so to speak; abasing Himself even to becoming man and conversing familiarly with us: "He conversed with men" (Bar. iii. 38). He went so far as to become an infant, to become poor, even so far as openly to die the death of a malefactor upon the cross. He went yet farther, even to reside under the appearance of bread, in order to become our constant companion and unite Himself intimately with us: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 57). In a word, He loves thee as much as though He had no love but towards thyself alone. For which reason thou oughtest to have no love for any but for Himself. Of Him, therefore, thou mayest say, and thou oughtest to say it: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16). My God has given Himself all to me, and I give myself all to Him; He has chosen me for His beloved, and I choose Him, of all others, for my only Love: "My Beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands" (Cant. v. 10).

3. Say, then, to Him often: O my Lord! wherefore dost Thou love me thus? what good thing dost Thou see in me? Hast Thou forgotten the injuries I have done Thee? But since Thou hast treated me so lovingly, and instead of casting me into hell, hast granted me so many favours, whom can I desire to love from this day forward but Thee, my God, my All? Ah, most gracious God, if in time past I have offended Thee, it is not so much the punishment I have deserved that now grieves me, as the

displeasure I have given Thee, who art worthy of infinite love. But Thou knowest not how to despise a heart that repents and humbles itself: "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. l. 19). Ah, now, indeed, neither in this life nor in the other do I desire any but Thee alone: "What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever" (Ps. lxxii. 25, 26). Thou alone art and shalt be for ever the only Lord of my heart, of my will; Thou my only Good, my Heaven, my Hope, my Love, my All: "The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever."

4. The more to strengthen thy confidence in God, often call to mind His loving treatment of thee, and the gracious means He has used to drive thee from the disorders of thy life and thy attachments to earth, in order to draw thee to His holy love; and therefore fear to have too little confidence in treating with thy God, now that thou hast a resolute will to love and to please Him with all thy power. The mercies He has granted thee are most sure pledges of the love He bears thee. God is displeased with a want of trust on the part of souls that heartily love Him, and whom He loves. If, then, thou desirest to please His loving Heart, converse with Him from this day forward with the greatest confidence and tenderness thou canst possibly have. "I have graven thee in My hands: thy walls are always before My eyes" (Is. xlix. 16). Beloved soul, says the Lord, what dost thou fear or mistrust? I have thee written in My hands, so as never to forget to do thee good. Art thou afraid of thy enemies? Know that the care of thy defence is always before Me, so that I cannot lose sight of it. Therefore did David rejoice, saying to God: "Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good will" (Ps. v. 13). Who, O Lord, can ever harm us, if Thou with Thy goodness and love dost defend and encompass us round about? Above all, animate thy confidence at the thought of the gift that God has given us of Jesus Christ: "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son" (St. John iii. 16). How can we ever fear, exclaims the Apostle, that God would refuse us any good, after He has vouch-

safed to give us His own Son? "He delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.)

5. "My delights are to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 31). The paradise of God, so to speak, is the heart of man. Does God love thee? Love Him. His delights are to be with thee; let thine be to be with Himself, to pass all thy lifetime with Him, in the delight of whose company thou hopest to spend a blissful eternity.

6. Accustom thyself to speak with Him alone, familiarly, with confidence and love, as to the dearest friend thou hast, and who loves thee best. If it be a great mistake, as has been already said, to converse mistrustfully with God,—to be always coming before Him as a slave, full of fear and confusion, comes before his prince, trembling with dread,—it would be a greater to think that conversing with God is but weariness and bitterness. No, it is not so: "Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness" (Wisd. viii. 16). Ask those souls who love Him with a true love, and they will tell thee that in the sorrows of their life they find no greater, no truer relief, than in a loving converse with God.

7. Now this does not require thee continually to apply thy mind to it, so as to forget all thy employments and recreations. It only requires of thee, without putting these aside, to act towards God as thou dost act on occasion towards those who love thee, and whom thou lovest.

8. Thy God is ever near thee, nay, within thee: "In Him we live, and move, and be" (Acts xvii. 28). There is no barrier at the door against any who desire to speak with Him, nay, God delights that thou shouldst treat with Him confidently. Treat with Him of thy business, thy plans, thy griefs, thy fears,—of all that concerns thee. Above all, do so (as I have said) with confidence, with open heart. For God is not wont to speak to the soul that speaks not to Him; forasmuch as, if she be not used to converse with Him, she would little understand His voice when He spoke to her. And this is what the Lord complains of: "Our sister is little: what shall we do to

our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?" (Cant. viii. 8.) Our sister is but a child in My love; what shall we do to speak to her if she understand Me not? God will have Himself esteemed the Lord of surpassing power and terribleness, when we despise His grace; but, on the contrary, He will have Himself treated with as the most affectionate Friend, when we love Him; and to this end He would have us often speak with Him familiarly and without restraint.

9. It is true that God ought always to be revered in the highest degree; but when He favours thee by making thee feel His Presence, and know His desire that thou shouldst speak to Him as to that One who loves thee above all, then express to Him thy feelings with freedom and confidence. "She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first sheweth herself unto them" (Wisd. vi. 14). When thou desirest His love, He takes the first step, without waiting till thou comest to Him; and presents Himself to thee, bringing with Him the graces and the remedies thou dost stand in need of. He only waits for thee to speak to Him, to show thee that He is near to thee, ready to hear and to comfort thee: "And His ears are unto their prayers" (Ps. xxxiii. 16).

10. By reason of His immensity, our God is in every place; but there are two places above all where He has His own peculiar dwelling. One is the highest heaven, where He is present by that glory which He communicates to the blessed; the other is upon earth,—it is within the humble soul that loves Him: "who dwelleth with a contrite and humble spirit" (Is. lvii. 15). He, then, our God, dwelleth in the height of heaven; and yet He disdains not to occupy and engage Himself day and night with His faithful servants in their cabins or their cells. And there He bestows on them His divine consolations, each one of which surpasses all the delights the world can give, and which he only desires not who has no experience of them: "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. xxxiii. 9).

11. Friends in the world have some hours in which they converse together, and others during which they are apart; but between God and thee (if thou wilt) there

shall never be one hour of separation: "Thou shalt rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet: the Lord will be at thy side" (Prov. iii. 24, 26). Thou shalt sleep, and God will place Himself at thy side, and watch with thee continually: "I will repose myself with Him, and He shall be a comfort in my cares and grief" (see Wisd. viii. 9-16). When thou takest thy rest, He departs not from beside thy pillow; He remains thinking always of thee, that when thou wakest in the night He may speak to thee by His inspirations, and receive from thee some act of love, of oblation, of thanksgiving; so as to keep up even in those hours His gracious and sweet converse with thee. Sometimes also He will speak to thee in thy sleep, and cause thee to hear His voice, that on waking thou mayest put in practice what He has spoken: "I will speak to him in a dream" (Num. xii. 6).

12. He is there also in the morning, to hear from thee some word of affection, of confidence; to be the depository of thy first thoughts, and of all the actions which thou shalt promise to perform that day to please Him; of all the griefs too which thou offerest to endure willingly for His glory and love. But as He fails not to present Himself to thee at the moment of thy waking, fail not thou, on thy part, to give Him immediately a look of love, and to rejoice when thy God announces to thee the glad tidings that He is not far from thee, as once He was by reason of thy sins; but that He loves thee, and would be beloved of thee: and at that same moment He gives thee the gracious precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart" (Deut. vi. 5).

13. Never, then, forget His sweet Presence, as do the greater part of men. Speak to Him as often as thou canst; for He does not grow weary of this nor disdain it, as do the lords of the earth. If thou lovest Him, thou wilt not be at a loss what to say to Him. Tell Him all that occurs to thee about thyself and thy affairs, as thou wouldst tell it to a dear friend. Look not upon Him as a haughty sovereign, who will only converse with the great, and on great matters. He, our God, delights to abase Himself to converse with us, loves to have us communicate to Him our smallest, our most daily concerns. He loves thee as

much, and has as much care for thee, as if He had none others to think of but thyself. He is as entirely devoted to thy interests as though the only end of His providence were to succour thee, of His almighty power to aid thee, of His mercy and goodness to take pity on thee, to do thee good, and gain by the delicate touches of His kindness thy confidence and love. Manifest, then, to Him freely all thy state of mind, and pray Him to guide thee to accomplish perfectly His holy will. And let all thy desires and plans be simply bent to discover His good pleasure, and do what is agreeable to His Divine Heart: "Bless God at all times;* and desire of Him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Him" (Tob. iv. 20).

14. Say not: But where is the need of disclosing to God all my wants, if He already sees and knows them better than I? True, He knows them; but God makes as if He knew not the necessities about which thou dost not speak to Him, and for which thou seekest not His aid. Our Saviour knew well that Lazarus was dead, and yet He made as if He knew it not, until the Magdalene had told Him of it, and then He comforted her by raising her brother to life again.

15. When, therefore, thou art afflicted with any sickness, temptation, persecution, or other trouble, go at once and beseech Him, that His hand may help thee. It is enough for thee to present the affliction before Him; to come in and say, "Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress" (Lam. i. 20). He will not fail to comfort thee, or at least to give thee strength to suffer that grief with patience; and it shall turn out a greater good to thee than if He had altogether freed thee from it. Tell Him all the thoughts of fear or of sadness that torment thee; and say to Him, My God, in Thee are all my hopes; I offer to Thee this affliction, and resign myself to Thy will; but do Thou take pity on me,—either deliver me out of it, or give me strength to bear it. And He will truly keep with thee that promise made in the Gospel to all those who are in trouble, to console and comfort them as often as they have re-

* In the Vulgate, *Revela Domino viam tuam*, "Make known thy way to the Lord."

course to Him : "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

16. He will not be displeased, that in thy desolations thou shouldst go to thy friends to find some relief; but He wills thee chiefly to have recourse to Himself. At all events, therefore, after thou hast applied to creatures, and they have been unable to comfort thy heart, have recourse to thy Creator, and say to Him, Lord, men have only words for me; "my friends are full of words:" they cannot comfort me, nor do I any more desire to be comforted by them; Thou art all my hope, all my love. From Thee only will I receive comfort; and let my comfort be, on this occasion to do what pleaseth Thee. Behold me ready to endure this grief through my whole life, through all eternity, if such be Thy good pleasure. Only do Thou help me.

17. Fear not that He will be offended if thou dost sometimes gently complain, and say to Him, "Why, O Lord, hast Thou retired afar off?" (Ps. ix. 1.) Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee, and desire nothing but Thy love; in pity help me, and forsake me not. And when the desolation lasts long, and troubles thee exceedingly, unite thy voice to that of Jesus in agony and dying on the Cross, and beseech His mercy, saying, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.) But let the effect of this be, to humble thee yet more at the thought, that he deserves no consolations who has offended God; and yet more to enliven thy confidence, knowing that God does all things, and permits all, for thy good: "All things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). Say with great courage, even when thou dost feel most troubled and disconsolate: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.) Lord, it is Thine to enlighten me, it is Thine to save me; in Thee do I trust: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded" (Ps. xxx. 1). And thus keep thyself in peace; knowing there never was any one who placed his hopes in God and was lost: "No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded" (Eccl. ii. 11). Consider, thy God loveth thee more than thou canst love thyself: what dost thou fear? David comforted himself, saying,

"The Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18). Say to Him, therefore, Lord, into Thy arms I cast myself; I desire to have no thought but of loving and pleasing Thee; behold me ready to do what Thou requirest of me. Thou dost not only will my good, Thou art careful for it; unto Thee, then, do I leave the care of my salvation. In Thee do I rest, and will rest for evermore, since Thou willest that in Thee I should place all my hopes: "In peace, in the selfsame, I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope" (Ps. iv. 9, 10).

18. "Think of the Lord in goodness" (Wisd. i. 1). In these words the Wise Man exhorts us to have more confidence in the Divine mercy than dread of the Divine justice; since God is immeasurably more inclined to bestow favours than to punish, as St. James says: "Mercy exalteth itself above judgment" (ii. 13). Whence the Apostle St. Peter (1 Ep. v. 7) tells us, that in all fears, whether about our interests for time or for eternity, we should commit ourselves altogether to the goodness of our God, who keeps the greatest care of our safety: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you." Oh, what a beautiful meaning does this lend to the title which David gives to the Lord, when he says that our God is the God who makes it His care to save: "Our God is the God of salvation" (Ps. lxxvii. 21); which signifies, as Bellarmine explains it, that the office peculiar to the Lord is, not to condemn, but to save all. For while He threatens with His displeasure those who disregard Him, He promises, on the other hand, His assured mercies to those who fear Him; as the Divine Mother said in her Canticle: "And His mercy is to them that fear Him." I set before thee, devout soul, all these passages of Scripture, that when the thought disquiets thee, Am I to be saved or no? am I predestined or no? thou mayest take courage, and understand from the promises He makes thee, what desire God has to save thee, if only thou art resolved to serve Him and to love Him as He demands at thy hands.

19. Further, when thou receivest pleasant news, do not act like those unfaithful thankless souls who have recourse to God in time of trouble, but in time of prosperity

forget and forsake Him. Be as faithful to Him as thou wouldst be to a friend who loves thee and rejoices in thy good; go at once and tell Him of thy gladness, and praise Him and give Him thanks, acknowledging it all as a gift from His hands; and rejoice in that happiness because it comes to thee of His good pleasure. Rejoice, therefore, and comfort thyself in Him alone: "I will rejoice in the Lord; and I will joy in God my Jesus" (Habac. iii. 18). Say to Him, My Jesus, I bless, and will ever bless Thee, for granting me so many favours, when I deserved at Thy hands not favours, but chastisements for the affronts I have given Thee. Say to Him, with the sacred Spouse: "All fruits, the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for Thee" (Cant. vii. 13). Lord, I give Thee thanks; I keep in memory all Thy bounties, past and present, to render Thee praise and glory for them for ever and ever.

20. But if thou lovest thy God, thou oughtest to rejoice more in His blessedness than in thine own. He who loves a friend very much sometimes takes more delight in that friend's good than if it had been his own. Comfort thyself, then, in the knowledge that thy God is infinitely blessed. Be often saying to Him: My beloved Lord, I rejoice more in Thy blessedness than in any good of mine; yes, for I love Thee more than I love myself.

21. Another mark of confidence highly pleasing to thy most loving God is this: that when thou hast committed any fault, thou be not ashamed to go at once to His feet and seek His pardon. Consider that God is so greatly inclined to pardon sinners, that He laments their perdition, when they depart far from Him and live as dead to His grace. Therefore does He lovingly call them, saying: "Why will you die, O house of Israel? Return ye, and live" (Ezech. xviii. 31, 32). He promises to receive the soul that has forsaken Him, so soon as she returns to His arms: "Turn ye to me, . . . and I will turn to you" (Zach. i. 3). Oh, if sinners did but know with what tender mercy the Lord stands waiting to forgive them! "The Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you" (Is. xxx. 18). Oh, did they but know the desire He has, not to chastise, but to see them converted, that He may embrace them, that He

may press them to His Heart! He declares: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). He even says: "And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow" (Is. i. 18). As though He had said, Sinners, repent of having offended Me, and then come unto Me: if I do not pardon you, "accuse Me;" upbraid Me, and treat Me as one unfaithful. But no, I will not be wanting to My promise. If you will come, know this: that though your consciences are dyed deep as crimson by your sins, I will make them by My grace as white as snow.

22. In a word, He has declared that when a soul repents of having offended Him, He forgets all her sins: "I will not remember all his iniquities" (Ezech. xlviii. 22). As soon, then, as thou fallest into any fault, raise thine eyes to God, make an act of love, and with humble confession of thy fault, hope assuredly for His pardon, and say to Him, "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick;" that heart which Thou dost love is sick, is full of sores: "heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee." Thou seekest after penitent sinners; behold, here is one at Thy feet, who is come in search of Thee. The evil is done already; what have I now to do? Thou wilt not have me lose courage: after this my sin Thou dost still love me, and I too love Thee. Yes, my God, I love Thee with all my heart; I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee; I purpose never to do so more. Thou, who art that God, "merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion," forgive me; make me to hear what Thou didst say to the Magdalene, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and give me strength to be faithful unto Thee for the time to come.

23. That thou mayest not lose courage at such a moment, cast a glance at Jesus on the Cross; offer His merits to the Eternal Father; and thus hope certainly for pardon, since He "spared not even His own Son." Say to Him with confidence, "Look on the face of Thy Christ" (Ps. lxxxiii. 10). My God, behold Thy Son, dead for my sake; and for the love of that Son forgive me. Attend greatly, devout soul, to the instruction commonly given by masters

of the spiritual life, after thy unfaithful conduct, at once to have recourse to God, though thou hast repeated it a hundred times in a day; and after thy falls, and the recourse thou hast had to the Lord (as has been just said), at once to be in peace. Otherwise, while thou remainest cast down and disturbed at the fault thou hast committed, thy converse with God will be small; thy trust in Him will fail; thy desire to love Him grow cold; and thou wilt be little able to go forward in the way of the Lord. On the other hand, by having immediate recourse to God to ask His forgiveness, and to promise Him amendment, thy very faults will serve to advance thee farther in the Divine love. Between friends who sincerely love each other, it often happens that when one has displeased the other, and then humbles himself and asks pardon, their friendship thereby becomes stronger than ever. Do thou likewise: see to it that thy very faults serve to bind thee yet closer in love to thy God.

24. In any kind of doubtfulness also, either on thy own account or that of others, never leave acting towards thy God with a confidence like to that of faithful friends, who consult together on every matter. So do thou take counsel with Himself, and beseech Him to enlighten thee, that thou mayest decide on what shall be most pleasing to Him: "Put those words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart" (Jud. ix. 18). Lord, tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do, or to answer; and thus will I. "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

25. Use towards Him also the freedom of recommending not only thy own needs, but also those of others. How agreeable will it be to thy God, that sometimes thou forget even thy own interests, to speak to Him of the advancement of His glory, of others' miseries, especially those who groan in affliction, of those souls, His spouses, who in purgatory sigh after the Vision of Himself, and of poor sinners who are living destitute of His grace! For these especially say to Him: Lord, Thou who art so amiable, and worthy of an infinite love, how dost Thou, then, endure to see such a number of souls in the world, on whom Thou hast bestowed so many favours, and who yet will not know

Thee, will not love Thee, nay, even offend and despise Thee? Ah, my God, object of all love, make Thyself to be known, make Thyself to be beloved. "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come;" may Thy Name be adored and beloved by all; may Thy love reign in all hearts. Ah, let me not depart without granting me some grace for those unfaithful souls for whom I pray.

26. It is said, that in purgatory those souls who in this life have had but little longing for heaven are punished with a particular suffering, called the pain of languor; and with reason, because to long but little for heaven, is to set small value on that great good of the eternal kingdom which our Redeemer has purchased for us by His death. Forget not, therefore, devout soul, frequently to sigh after heaven: say to thy God, that it seems to thee an endless time for thee to come and see Him, and to love Him face to face. Long ardently to depart out of this banishment, this scene of sinning, and danger of losing His grace, that thou mayest arrive in that land of love where thou shalt love Him with all thy powers. Say to Him again and again, Lord, so long as I live on this earth, I am always in danger of forsaking Thee, and losing Thy love. When shall it be that I quit this life, wherein I am ever offending Thee, and come to love Thee with all my soul, and unite myself to Thee, with no danger of losing Thee any more? St. Teresa was ever sighing after this sort, and used to rejoice when she heard the clock strike, because another hour of life, and of the danger of losing God, was past and gone. For she so greatly desired death in order to see God, that she was dying with the desire to die; and hence she composed that loving canticle of hers, "I die, because I do not die."

27. In a word, if thou desirest to delight the loving Heart of thy God, be careful to speak to Him as often as thou art able, and with the fullest confidence that He will not disdain to answer and to speak with thee in return. He does not, indeed, make Himself heard in any voice which reaches thy ears, but in a voice which thy heart can well perceive, when thou dost withdraw from converse with creatures, to occupy thyself in conversing with thy

God alone: "I will lead her into the wilderness,* and I will speak to her heart" (Osee ii. 14). He will then speak to thee by such inspirations, such interior lights, such manifestations of His goodness, such sweet touches in thy heart, such tokens of forgiveness, such experience of peace, such hopes of heaven, such rejoicings within thee, such sweetness of His grace, such loving and close embraces, in a word, such voices of love,—as are well understood by those souls whom He loves, and who seek for nothing but Himself alone.

28. Lastly, to make a brief summary of what has already been said at large, I will not omit to suggest a devout practice whereby thou mayest fulfil all thy daily actions in a manner pleasing to God. When thou wakest in the morning, let it be thy first thought to raise thy mind to Him, offering to His glory all thou shalt do or suffer that day, praying Him to assist thee by His grace. Then make thy other morning acts of devotion, acts of thanksgiving and of love, prayers, and resolutions to live that day as though it were to be the last of thy life. Father St. Jure recommends the making in the morning a compact with the Lord; that every time thou makest a certain sign, as placing thy hand upon thy heart, or raising thy eyes to heaven or to the crucifix, and the like, thou shouldst thereby intend to make an act of love, of desire to see Him loved by all, of oblation of thyself, and other acts of the same kind. When thou hast made these acts, and placed thy soul in the side of Jesus and under the mantle of Mary, and have prayed the Eternal Father that for the love of Jesus and Mary He would protect thee during the day, be careful, before thou engage in any thing else, to make thy mental prayer, or meditation, at least for half an hour; and let thy specially chosen meditation be the sorrow and the shame which Jesus Christ suffered in His Passion. This is the dearest subject to loving souls, and the one which most kindles Divine love within them. If thou wouldst make spiritual progress, let three devotions be especially dear to thee: devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to the

* *In solitudinem*, "into solitude." *Vulg.*

ever-blessed Virgin. In mental prayer, make again and again acts of contrition, of love to God, and oblation of yourself. The Venerable Father Charles Caraffa, founder of the Pious Oratories, said, that one fervent act of the love of God made thus in the morning was sufficient to maintain the soul in fervour throughout the whole day.

29. Then, besides the more specific acts of devotion, such as confession, communion, recitation of the divine office, &c. whenever thou art engaged in external occupations, as in study, in labour, or in any other employment that may be proper to thy condition, never forget, when setting about it, to make an offering of it to God, praying for His assistance to enable thee to perform it in a perfect manner; and do not omit to retire frequently into the cell of thy heart, in order to unite thyself with God, according to the practice of St. Catherine of Sienna. In short, whatever thou doest, do it with and for God. In going out of thy room or house, and on returning again, always commend thyself to the Divine Mother, by saying a Hail Mary. When sitting down to meals, make an offering to God of the disgusts or gratifications thou mayest find in what thou eatest and drinkest; and, on rising from table, return thanks to Him, and say: Lord, how great is Thy goodness to one who has offended Thee so much! In the course of the day be careful to make thy spiritual reading, to visit the Most Holy Sacrament and the most holy Mary; and in the evening to say the Rosary, and to make an examination of conscience, together with the Christian acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, resolutions of amendment, and of receiving the Holy Sacraments during life and at the hour of death, forming also the intention of gaining all the indulgences which thou canst. And again, on getting into bed, reflect that, if thou hadst thy deserts, thou wouldst be lying down in the flames of hell; then, with the Crucifix in thy arms, compose thyself to sleep, saying: "In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and take my rest."

30. And here, in passing, I would briefly point out to thee the many indulgences which are attached to various prayers or acts of devotion. Whence it is desirable for

thee, in the morning, to make the intention of gaining all the indulgences in thy power during the day. To one who makes acts of the three theological virtues mentioned above, of faith, &c., there are granted seven years for each day; and, by continuing them for a month, a plenary indulgence may be gained, applicable also to the souls in purgatory, and to himself *in articulo mortis*. In like manner, form the intention of gaining also all the indulgences granted for saying the Rosary on beads properly blessed, the *Angelus Domini* three times a day, the Litanies of our Blessed Lady, the *Salve Regina*, the *Ave Maria*, and the *Gloria Patri*: for saying, 'Blessed be the holy and immaculate and most pure conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary:' as also for saying, 'Praised now and for ever be the Most Holy Sacrament:' for reciting the prayer *Anima Christi*, &c., for bowing the head at the *Gloria Patri*, and at the most holy names of Jesus and Mary; as also for hearing Mass; for making half an hour's mental prayer; to which, besides a partial, there is also a plenary indulgence attached, provided it be continued for a month, on condition of confession and communion in the course of the same; for genuflecting before the Most Holy Sacrament, and for kissing the crucifix. Always have the intention formed of gaining every such indulgence.

31. Then, that thou mayest be able to keep thyself ever in a state of recollection and union with God, as long as thou livest, and as far as may be possible, turn every thing that thou mayest see or hear into an occasion for raising thy mind to God, or for taking a glance at eternity. For example, when thou seest running water, reflect that thy life is also in like manner running on, and carrying thee nearer and nearer to death. When thou seest a lamp going out for want of oil, reflect that thus also one day thou wilt have to bring thy life to its end. When thou seest the graves or remains of the dead, consider that thou also hast to become like them. When thou seest the great ones of this world rejoicing in their wealth or distinction, pity their folly, and say, For me God is sufficient: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of the Lord" (Ps. xix. 8). Let these glory in such vanity; I

will make nothing my glory but the grace of God, and the love of Him. When thou beholdest the pompous funerals or the fine sepulchral monuments of great folks who are dead, say: If these are damned, what is the good of this pomp of theirs to them? When thou beholdest the sea in a calm or a storm, consider the difference which there is between a soul when in the grace and when out of the grace of God. When thou seest a tree that is withered, consider that a soul without God is serviceable for nothing but to be cast into fire. If thou ever happen to see one who has been guilty of some great crime, trembling with shame and fright in the presence of his judge, or of his father, or of his bishop, consider what the panic of a sinner will be in the presence of Christ his judge. When it thunders, and thou becomest alarmed, reflect how those miserable ones who are damned tremble, as they hear continually in hell the thunders of the Divine wrath. If thou ever seest one who has been condemned to suffer a painful death, and saying, Is there, then, no longer any means for my escaping death? consider what will be the despair of a soul when it shall be condemned to hell, as it says: Is there, then, no longer any means for my escaping from eternal ruin?

32. When thine eye rests on scenes in the country or along the shore, on flowers or fruits, and thou art delighted by the sight and scent of all, say: Behold, how many are the beautiful creatures which God has created for me in this world, in order that I may love Him; and what further enjoyments does He not keep prepared for me in Paradise! St. Teresa used to say, that when she saw any beautiful hills or slopes, they seemed to reproach her for her own ingratitude to God. And the Abbot de Rancé, founder of La Trappe, said that the beautiful creatures around him reminded him of his own obligation to love God. St. Augustine also said the same, crying out aloud: 'Heaven, and earth, and all things tell me to love Thee.' It is related of a certain holy man, that in passing through the fields he would strike with a little stick the flowers and plants which he found, saying: 'Be silent; do not reproach me any longer for my ingratitude to God; I have

understood you: be silent; say no more.' When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi held in her hand any beautiful fruit or flower, she used to feel herself smitten by it with Divine love, saying to herself: 'Behold, my God has thought from all eternity of creating this fruit, this flower, in order to give it me as a token of the love which He bears towards me.'

33. When thou seest rivers or brooks, reflect that as the water which thou beholdest keeps running on, without ever stopping, to the ocean, so ought thou to be ever hastening on to God, who is thy only good. When thou happenest to be in a vehicle that is drawn by beasts of burden, say, See what labour these innocent animals go through for my service; and how much pains do I take myself in order to serve and please my God? When thou seest a little dog, which, for a miserable morsel of bread, is so faithful to its master, reflect how much greater reason thou hast to be faithful to God, who has created, and preserved, and provided for thee, and heaps upon thee so many blessings. When thou hearest the birds sing, say, Harken, O my soul, to the praise which these little creatures are giving to their Creator; and what art thou doing? Then do thou also praise Him with acts of love. On the other hand, when thou hearest the cock crow, recall to thy memory that there once was a time when thou also, like Peter, denied thy God; and renew thy contrition and thy tears. So, likewise, when thou seest the house or place where thou hast sinned, turn thyself to God, and say: 'The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord' (Ps. xxiv. 7).

34. When thou beholdest any valleys, consider that as their fertility is owing to the waters which run down from the mountains, so from heaven do graces descend upon the souls of the humble, passing the proud aside. When thou seest a beautifully-ornamented church, consider the beauty of a soul which, being in a state of grace, is a real temple of God. When thou beholdest the sea, consider the immensity and the greatness of God. When thou seest fire, or candles lighted on an altar, say: How many years is it since I ought to have been cast into hell to burn? But

since Thou, O Lord, hast not sent me there, make this heart of mine now to burn with love for Thee, as that wood or those candles burn. When thou lookest up at the sky, all studded with stars, say with St. Andrew of Avellino: 'O my feet, you will one day have those stars beneath you.'

35. Then, in order frequently to recall to mind the mysteries of our Saviour's love, when thou seest fodder, mangers, or caves, let the Infant Jesus in the stable of Bethlehem be present to thy recollection. When thou seest saws, hammers, planes, or axes, remember how Jesus worked, like a mere lad, in the shop at Nazareth. Then, if thou seest ropes, thorns, nails, or pieces of wood, reflect on the Passion and Death of our Redeemer. St. Francis of Assisi, on seeing a lamb, would begin to weep, saying: 'My Lord like a lamb was led to death for me.' Again: when thou seest altars, chalices, or patens, recall to mind the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us in giving us the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

36. Frequently during the day make an offering of thyself to God, as St. Teresa used to do, saying: 'Lord, here am I: do with me that which pleaseth Thee: declare to me Thy will, that I may do it for Thee: I wish to do it thoroughly.' Then repeat, as often as you can, acts of love towards God. St. Teresa used also to say, that acts of love are the fuel by which holy love is to be kept on fire within the heart. When the Venerable Sister Seraphine of Carpi was one day considering that the mule belonging to the convent had not the power of loving God, she expressed her compassion for it thus: 'Poor brute; thou neither knowest nor canst love thy God;' and the mule set her weeping so that the tears fell in streams from her eyes:—so likewise do thou, when beholding any animal which has not the capacity for knowing or loving God, animate thyself, who canst love Him, to make the more abundant acts of love. Whenever thou fallest into any fault, humble thyself for it immediately; and, with an act of more fervent love, endeavour to rise again. When any thing adverse happens, immediately make an offering

to God of what thou hast to suffer, bringing thy will into uniformity with His own ; and ever accustom thyself under all adverse circumstances to repeat these words : ' Thus God wills ; thus I will too.' Acts of resignation are the acts of love which are most precious and acceptable to the Heart of God.

37. When thou hast to decide upon any thing, or to give any counsel of importance, first, commend thyself to God, and then set about thy undertaking, or give thy opinion. As often as thou canst during the day, after the example of St. Rose of Lima, repeat the prayer : *Deus in adiutorium meum intende* : ' Lord, come to my assistance ; do not leave me in my own hands.' And for this end frequently turn to the image of the Crucified, or to that of the most holy Mary, which is in thy room ; and do not omit to make frequent invocations of the names of Jesus and of Mary, especially in time of temptation. Since God is infinite goodness, His desire of communicating His graces to us is perfect. The Venerable Father Alvarez one day saw our Saviour with His hands full of graces, and going about in search of those to whom He might dispense them. But it is His will that we should ask them of Him : " Ask, and ye shall receive," otherwise He will draw back His hand ; whereas, on the contrary, He will willingly open it to those who call upon Him. And who is there, says the Preacher, that hath called upon Him, and God despised him by not granting his prayer ? " Who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him ?" (Ecclus. ii. 12.) And David tells us, that the Lord shows not merely mercy, but great mercy to those who call upon Him : " For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee" (Ps. lxxxv. 5).

38. Oh, how good and bountiful is the Lord to him who seeks Him lovingly : " The Lord is good to the soul that seeks Him" (Lam. iii. 25). If he lets Himself be found even by him who seeks Him not : " I was found by them that did not seek me" (Rom. x. 20), how much more willingly will He let Himself be found by one who seeks Him, and seeks Him, too, in order to serve Him and to love Him !

To conclude : St. Teresa says, that holy souls in this world have to conform themselves by love to what the souls of the blessed do in heaven. As the saints in heaven occupy themselves only with God, and have no other thought or joy than in His glory and in His love, so also must this be the case with thee. While thou art in this world, let God be thy only happiness, the only object of thy affections, the only end of all thy actions and desires, until thou comest to that eternal kingdom, where thy love shall be in all things perfected and completed, and thy desires shall be perfectly fulfilled and satisfied.

ON UNIFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

Our whole perfection consists in loving God, who is in Himself most lovely: "Charity is the bond of perfection" (Coloss. iii. 14). But, then, all perfection in the love of God consists in the union of our own with His most holy will. This, indeed, is the principal effect of love, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite observes, 'such a union of the will of those who love as makes it to become one and the same will.'⁶ And therefore the more united a person is to the Divine will, so much the greater will be his love. It is quite true that mortifications, meditations, communions, and works of charity towards others, are pleasing to God. But where is it that this is the case? When they are done in conformity to His will; for otherwise, not only does He not approve them, but He abominates and punishes them. Suppose that there are two servants, one of whom labours hard and incessantly throughout the day, but will do every thing after his own fashion; while the other does not work so much, but acts always in obedience to orders: is it not certain that the latter, and not the former, is the one who pleases his master? In what respect do any works of ours serve to the glory of God, where they are not done according to His good pleasure? It is not sacrifices that the Lord desires (says the prophet to Saul), but obedience to His will: "Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?" (1 Kings xv. 22.) To refuse to obey is like the crime of idolatry. He who will act from his own will, independently of that of God, commits a kind of idolatry; since in that case, instead of worshipping the Divine will, he worships, in a certain sense, his own.

The greatest glory, then, that we can give to God is the

fulfilment in every thing of His holy will. This is what our Redeemer, whose object in coming upon earth was the establishment of the glory of God, principally came to teach us by His example. See how St. Paul makes Him address His eternal Father: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: then said I, Behold, I come, that I should do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5, 7). Thou hast refused to accept the victims which mankind have offered Thee. It is Thy will that I should sacrifice to Thee the body which Thou hast given Me: lo, I am ready to perform that will of Thine. And hence it is, that He so often declares that He had come upon earth not to fulfil His own, but His Father's will only: "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (St. John vi. 33). And on this account He wished that the world might have known the love which He bore toward His Father, from the obedience to His will which He manifested in sacrificing Himself upon the cross for the salvation of mankind; just as He said Himself in the garden, when going forth to meet His enemies, who were come to take Him and lead Him away to death: "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: arise, let us go hence" (St. John xiv. 31). And for this reason, too, it was that He said, that He would recognise, as a brother of His own, him who should have acted according to the Divine will: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, he is My brother" (St. Matt. xii. 50).

On this account it is that all the saints have ever kept steadfastly in view the fulfilment of the Divine will, thoroughly understanding that herein consists the entire perfection of a soul. The Blessed Henry Suso used to say: 'God does not desire that we should abound in knowledge, but that in all things we should submit ourselves to His will.'⁷ And St. Teresa: 'All that one who devotes himself to prayer has need to acquire, is the conformity of his own will to the Divine; and he may rest assured that herein consists the highest perfection. Whoever practises this best shall receive from God the greatest gifts, and shall make most progress in the interior life.' The Dominican

nun, the Blessed Stephana of Soncino, being one day, in a vision, carried into heaven, saw certain persons who were dead, and with whom she had been acquainted, stationed amongst the seraphim; and it was told her, that these had been raised to so high a position in glory through the perfect uniformity to God's will which they had had on earth. And the Blessed Suso already mentioned used, when speaking of himself, to say: 'I would much rather be the vilest worm of earth through God's will, than a seraph through my own.'

While we are in this world, we should learn from the blessed in heaven the way in which we have to love God. The pure and perfect love which the blessed in heaven entertain for God lies in their own perfect union with the Divine will. Should the seraphim understand it to be His will that they must employ themselves for all eternity in gathering into a heap the sands of the sea-shore, or in plucking up the grass from the gardens, they would willingly do it with all possible pleasure. Nay, more: if God were to give them to understand that they should go to burn in the flames of hell, they would immediately precipitate themselves into that abyss, in order to accomplish the Divine will. And it is this which Jesus Christ has taught us to pray, namely, that we may perform the Divine will on earth, as the saints perform it in heaven: *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in celo et in terra*: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (St. Matt. vi. 10). The Lord calls David a man after His own heart, because David accomplished all His desires: "I have found a man according to My own heart, who shall do all My wills" (Acts xiii. 22). David was ever prepared to embrace the Divine will, as he frequently declared: "My heart is ready, O God; my heart is ready" (Ps. lvi. 8; cvii. 1). And, on the other hand, the only prayer which he made to the Lord was, that He would teach him to do His will: "Teach me to do Thy will" (Ps. cxlii. 10). A single act of perfect uniformity to the Divine will is sufficient to make one a saint. Look at Saul, whom Jesus Christ illuminates and converts, while he is going on in his persecution of the Church. What does Saul do? what does he say? He

simply makes an offering of himself to do the Divine will: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.) And, behold, the Lord declares him to be a vessel of election and apostle of the Gentiles: "This man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles" (Acts ix. 15). Yes: for he who gives his will to God gives Him every thing: he who gives Him his goods in alms, his blood by disciplines, his food by fasting, gives to God a part of what he possesses; but he who gives Him his will gives Him the whole; so that he can say to Him: Lord, I am poor; but I give Thee all that is in my power: in giving Thee my will, there remains nothing for me to give Thee. But this is precisely all that our God claims from us: "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26). My son, says the Lord to each of us; My son, give Me thy heart, that is to say, thy will. 'There is no offering,' says St. Augustine, 'that we can make to God more acceptable to Himself, than to say to Him: Take possession of us.' No: we cannot offer to God any thing more precious, than by saying to Him: Lord, take possession of us; we give our whole will to Thee; make us to understand what it is that Thou dost desire of us, and we will perform it.

If, then, we would give a full satisfaction to the Heart of God, we must bring our own will in every thing into conformity with His; and not only into conformity, but into uniformity, too, as regards all that God ordains. Conformity signifies the conjoining of our own will to the will of God; but uniformity signifies, further, our making of the Divine and our own will one will only, so that we desire nothing but what God desires, and His sole will becomes ours. This is the sum and substance of that perfection to which we ought to be ever aspiring; this is what must be the aim of all our works, and of all our desires, meditations, and prayers. For this we must invoke the assistance of all our patron saints and of our guardian angels, and, above all, of our Divine Mother Mary, who was the most perfect of all the saints, for this reason, that she most perfectly ever embraced the Divine will.

But the chief point lies in our embracing the will of

God in all things which befall us, not only when they are favourable, but when they are contrary to our desires. When things go on well, even sinners find no difficulty in being in a state of uniformity to the Divine will; but the saints are in uniformity also under circumstances which run counter and are mortifying to self-love. It is herein that the perfection of our love for God is shown. The Venerable Father John Avila used to say: 'A single Blessed be God,' when things go contrary, is of more value than thousands of thanksgivings when they are to our liking.'

Moreover, we must bring ourselves into uniformity to the Divine will, not only as regards those adverse circumstances which come to us directly from God,—such, for instance, as infirmities, desolations of spirit, poverty, the death of parents, and other things of a similar nature,—but also as regards those which come to us through the instrumentality of men, as in the case of contumelies, reproaches, acts of injustice, thefts, and persecutions of every kind. On this point, we must understand that when we suffer injury from any one in our reputation, our honour, or our property, although the Lord does not will the sin which such an one commits, He nevertheless does will our humiliation, our poverty, and our mortification. It is certain and of faith, that every thing which comes to pass in the world comes to pass through the Divine will: "I form the light and darkness, I make peace and create evil" (Is. xlv. 8). * From God come all things that are good and all things that are evil; that is to say, all things which are contrary to our own likings, and which we falsely call evil; for, in truth, they are good, when we receive them as coming from His hands: "Shall there be an evil in the city

* It may be well to give here the commentary of Cornelius à Lapide on this passage—"Making peace and creating evil." The word *peace* in the Hebrew signifies quiet, abundance, liberty, happiness, an affluence of every good: therefore *evil*, as opposed to it, is confusion, want, pestilence, famine, war, slavery, captivity, and whatever afflicts man, and makes him miserable. God, therefore, creates this evil of *punishment*, but not the evil of *sin*. So S. Jerome, S. Aug., S. Irenæus, S. Chrysostom, &c., and S. Greg. the Great, *Moral.* iii. 7, to whom, as also to S. Jerome on the text, the reader is referred for further explanation.—Ed.

which the Lord hath not done?" said the prophet Amos (Amos iii. 6). And the Wise Man said it before: "Good things and evil, life and death, are from God" (Eccles. xi. 14). It is true, as I observed above, that whenever any one unjustly treats you in an injurious manner, God does not will the sin which such a person commits, nor concur in the malice of his intentions; but He quite concurs, with a general concurrence, as regards the material action by which such an one wounds, plunders, or injures you; so that what you have to suffer is certainly willed by God, and comes to you from His hands. Hence it was that the Lord told David that He was the Author of the injuries which Absalom would inflict upon him, even to the taking away his wives in his very presence; and that in punishment for his sins: "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thy own house, and I will take thy wives before thy eyes, and give them to thy neighbour" (2 Kings xii. 2). Hence, too, He told the Jews that it would be as a punishment for their wickedness when He should have commanded the Assyrians to spoil and bring them to ruin: "The Assyrian, he is the rod of My fury . . . I will give him a charge to take away the spoils, and to lay hold on the prey" (Is. x. 5, 6); which St. Augustine explains: 'The wickedness of these men is made to be, as it were, an axe of God.'⁸ God uses the iniquity of the Assyrians, like an axe, to chastise the Jews. And Jesus Himself said to St. Peter, that His Passion and Death did not come to Him so much from men, as from His Father Himself: "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (St. John xviii. 2.)

When the messenger (who is thought to have been the devil) came to Job to tell him that the Sabeans had taken all his goods away, and had put his sons to death, what is the saint's reply? "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away" (Job i. 21). He said not, the Lord hath given me sons and property, and the Sabeans have taken them away from me; but the Lord hath given them me, and the Lord hath taken them away; because he perfectly understood, that that loss of his was willed by God; and therefore he added, "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it

done ; blessed be the name of the Lord." We must not, then, look upon the troubles which befall us as happening by chance, or only through the fault of others ; we must rest assured that every thing which happens to us comes to pass through the Divine will. "You should know, that whatever happens in this world contrary to our will, does not happen excepting through the will of God."⁹ Epictetus and Atho, blessed martyrs of Jesus Christ, when subjected to the torture by the tyrant, torn with hooks of iron and burnt with blazing torches, said nothing but this only : ' Lord, let Thy will be accomplished in us ;' and on arriving at the place of their suffering, they exclaimed in a loud voice, ' Blessed be Thou, O everlasting God, because Thy will has been in every thing fulfilled in us.'¹⁰

Cesarius¹¹ relates of a certain religious, that, although there was in no respect any external difference between himself and the others, he had nevertheless arrived at such a degree of sanctity, as to heal the sick by the mere touch of his clothes. His Superior, in astonishment at this, one day asked him how he could ever perform such miracles, while his life was not more exemplary than that of others. In reply, he said, that it was a matter of astonishment to himself also, and that he did not know how to account for it. "But what devotions do you practise?" asked the Abbot. The good religious in answer said, that he did but little or nothing in this respect ; only, that he had ever made it his great care to will that alone which God willed, and that the Lord had granted him the grace to keep his own will thoroughly abandoned in that of God. "Prosperity," he said, "does not elate me, nor does adversity cast me down, because I receive every thing from the hands of God ; and to this end it is that I direct all my prayers, namely, that His will may perfectly accomplish itself in me." "And with respect to that loss," rejoined the Superior, "which our enemy caused us the other day, by depriving us of our means of subsistence, setting fire to our farm-buildings where our corn and cattle were housed, did you not feel some resentment in consequence?" "No, my father," was his reply ; "but, on the contrary, I returned thanks to God for it, as is my custom in similar cases, knowing that

God does and permits all for His own glory and for our greater good ; and with this conviction, I am always content under every circumstance which comes to pass." The Abbot, understanding this, and seeing in that soul so great a uniformity to the Divine will, was no longer surprised at his performing such great miracles.

He who acts in this way does not only become a saint, but he enjoys, even in this world, a perpetual peace. Alphonsus the Great, king of Arragon and a most wise prince, on being one day asked whom he considered to be the happiest man in the world, replied, He who abandons himself to the will of God, and receives all things, whether prosperous or adverse, as from His hands. "To those who love God, all things work unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). Those who love God are ever content, because their whole pleasure lies in the accomplishment, even in things that run counter to themselves, of the Divine will : and hence even afflictions themselves are converted into their contentment, by the thought that in the acceptance of them they are giving pleasure to their Lord whom they love : "Whatever shall befall the just man, it shall not make him sad" (Prov. xii. 21). And, in truth, what greater contentment can a man ever experience, than in seeing the accomplishment of all that he desires ? Now whenever any one desires nothing save what God desires, since every thing that comes to pass in the world (sin only excepted) always comes to pass through the will of God, every thing that such an one desires does consequently come to pass. There is a story in the lives of the Fathers of a certain countryman, whose land was more productive than that of others, and who, on being asked how it happened, replied, that no one should be surprised at it, because he always had such weather as he desired. "And how so?" it was asked. "Yes," replied he, "because I desire no weather but that which God desires ; and as I desire what God desires, so does He give me the fruits of the earth as I desire them." Souls that are truly resigned, says Salvian, if they are in a state of humiliation, desire this ; if they suffer poverty, they desire to be poor ; in short, whatever happens to them, they desire it all ; and therefore they are, in this life, happy : "They are in hum-

ble station, they wish for this; they are poor, they make poverty their delight; therefore we must say of them, that they are happy.⁷ When cold or heat, rain or wind, prevails, he who is in a state of union with the Divine will says: I wish it to be cold, I wish it to be hot; I wish the wind to blow, the rain to fall, because God wishes it so. Does poverty, persecution, sickness, death arrive, I also wish (says such an one) to be poor, persecuted, sick; I wish even to die, because God wishes it thus.

This is the beautiful liberty which the sons of God enjoy, worth more than all the domains and all the kingdoms of this world. This is that great peace which the Saints experience, which "surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. iv. 7), with which all the pleasures of the senses, all gaieties, festivities, distinctions, and all other worldly satisfactions, cannot compete; for these, being, as they are, unsubstantial and transitory, although, while they last, they may be fascinating to the senses, nevertheless do not bring contentment, but affliction, to the spirit wherein true contentment resides: so that Solomon, after having enjoyed such worldly pleasures to the full, cried out in his affliction, "But this also is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. iv. 16). "The fool" (says the Holy Spirit) "is changed like the moon: the holy man continueth in wisdom like the sun" (Eccles. xxvii. 12). The fool, that is to say, the sinner, changes like the moon, which to-day grows, to-morrow wanes. To-day you will see him laughing, to-morrow weeping; to-day all gentleness, to-morrow furious like the tiger. And why so? because his contentment depends on the prosperity or the adversity which he meets with; and therefore he varies as the circumstances which befall him vary. Whereas the just man is like the sun, ever uniform in his serenity under whatever circumstances may come to pass; because his contentment lies in his uniformity to the Divine will, and therefore he enjoys a peace which nothing can disturb: "And on earth peace to men of good-will" (St. Luke ii. 14), said the angel to the shepherds. And who can these men of good-will ever be, but those who are at all times in unison with the will of God, which is supremely good and perfect? "The will of

God is good, delightful, and perfect." Yes; because He wills only that which is best and most perfect.

The Saints, through their uniformity to the Divine will, have enjoyed in this world a paradise in anticipation. St. Dorotheus tells us, that it was thus that the ancient fathers kept themselves in profound peace, receiving all things as they did from the hands of God. When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi heard mention only of the will of God, she used to experience such intense consolation, that she fell into an ecstasy of love. And although, on the other hand, the sting of adverse circumstances will not fail to make itself felt, yet its influence will not extend beyond the lower part of our nature; for in the higher part of the soul there will reign peace and tranquillity, while the will remains in union with that of God. "Your joy" (said the Redeemer to the Apostles) "no man shall take from you. That your joy may be full" (St. John xvi. 22, 24). He who is ever in uniformity to the Divine will possesses a full and perpetual joy; full, because he has all that he wishes for, as was observed above; perpetual, because it is a joy of which no one can deprive him, while, at the same time, no one can prevent that which God wills from coming to pass.

Father John Taulerus relates of himself,¹² that after having for many years prayed the Lord to send some one to instruct him in the true spiritual life, he one day heard a voice saying to him: 'Go to such a church, and you shall find what you ask for.' On reaching the church, he finds at the gate a beggar, barefooted and with scarcely a rag on his back. He salutes him: 'Good day, my friend.' The poor man replies: 'Sir, I do not remember ever to have had a bad day.' The Father rejoins, 'God grant you a happy life;' to which he answers, 'But I have never been unhappy.' And then he goes on to say: 'Listen, my Father; it is not without reason that I have told you that I have never had a bad day; because, when I suffer hunger, I praise God; when it snows or rains, I bless Him; if I am treated with contempt, or repulsed by any, or if I experience misfortunes of any other kind, I always give glory to my God for it. I said, besides, that I have never

been unhappy: and this also is true; because it is my habit to desire, without reservation, all that God desires; therefore, in all that happens to me, whether it be pleasant or painful, I receive it from His hands with joy, as being what is best for me; and herein lies my happiness.' 'And if it should ever happen,' says Taulerus, 'that God willed you to be damned, what would you say then?' 'If God were to will this,' replied the beggar, 'I would, with all humility and love, lock myself so fast in my Lord's embrace, and hold Him so tight, that if it were to be His will to cast me down into hell, He would be obliged to come along with me; and thus, with Him, it would then be sweeter to me to be in hell, than to possess without Him all the enjoyments of Heaven.' 'Where was it that you found God?' said the Father. 'I found Him where I took leave of creatures,' was the reply. 'Who are you?' The poor man answered, 'I am a king.' 'And where is your kingdom?' 'It is within my soul, where I keep every thing in due order; the passions are subjected to the reason, and the reason to God.' In conclusion, Taulerus asked him, what it was that had led him on to so high a degree of perfection? 'It has been silence,' said he; 'observing silence with man, in order to hold converse with God; and also the union which I have maintained with my Lord, in whom I have found, and still do find, all my peace.' Such, in short, had this poor man become through his union with the Divine will; and certainly he was, in all his poverty, more wealthy than all the monarchs of the earth, and in his sufferings more happy than all the men of the world with their earthly pleasures.

Oh, great indeed is the folly of those who fight against the Divine will! They have now to suffer troubles, because no one can ever prevent the accomplishment of the Divine decrees: "Who resisteth His will?" (Rom. ix. 19.) And, on the other hand, they have to suffer them without deriving benefit from them; nay, even drawing down upon themselves greater chastisements in the next life, and greater disquietude in this: "Who hath resisted Him, and hath had peace?" (Job ix. 4.) Let the sick man make as great an outcry as he will about his pains; let him who is

in poverty complain, rave, blaspheme against God as much as he pleases in his distresses,—what will he gain by it, but the doubling of his affliction? 'What are you in search of, O foolish man,' says Augustine, 'when seeking good things? Seek that one Good in whom are all things good.' What are you going in search of, poor silly fellow, out of thy God? Find God, unite yourself to, bind yourself up with His will; and you will be ever happy, both in this life and in the other.

And, in short, what is there that God wills but our good? Whom can we ever find to love us more than He? It is His will, not merely that no one should perish, but that all should save and sanctify themselves: "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 St. Pet. iii. 9). "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 3). It is in our good that God has placed His own glory, being, as St. Leo says, in His own nature goodness infinite: 'God, whose nature is goodness; and, it being the nature of goodness to desire to spread itself abroad, God has a supreme desire to make the souls of men partakers of His own bliss and glory. And if, in this life, He sends us tribulations, they are all for our own good: "All things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28). Even chastisements, as was observed by the holy Judith, do not come to us from God for our destruction, but in order to our amendment and salvation: "Let us believe that they have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction" (Jud. viii. 27). In order to save us from eternal evils, the Lord throws His own good-will around us: "O Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good-will" (Ps. v. 13). He not only desires, but is anxious for, our salvation: "The Lord is careful for me" (Ps. xxxix. 18). And what is there that God will ever refuse us, says St. Paul, after having given us His own Son: "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) This, then, is the confidence in which we ought to abandon ourselves to the Divine dispensations, all of which have for their object our own good. Let us ever say, under all the circum-

stances which may happen to befall us: "In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope" (Ps. iv. 10). Let us also place ourselves entirely in His hands; for He will certainly take care of us: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you" (1 St. Pet. v. 7). Then, let our thoughts be fixed on God, and on the fulfilment of His will, that He may think upon us and upon our good. 'Daughter,' said the Lord to St. Catherine of Sienna, 'do thou think upon Me, and I will ever think upon thee.' Let us frequently be saying with the sacred spouse: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (Cant. ii. 16). The thoughts of my Beloved are upon my good; I will think upon nothing but upon pleasing Him, and bringing myself into a state of perfect uniformity to His holy will. The holy Abbot Nilus used to say, that we ought never to pray to God that He would make our will succeed, but that in us He would accomplish His own will. And whenever, too, things that are contrary befall us, let us accept them all, as from God's hands, not merely with patience, but with joy; as did the Apostles when they "went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41). And what greater satisfaction can a soul enjoy, than in the knowledge that by suffering with a good will any thing which it may have to suffer, it gives to God the greatest pleasure that it can give Him? The masters of the spiritual life teach that, though the desire which certain souls have of suffering to give Him pleasure is acceptable to Him, He is yet more pleased with the uniformity of those who wish for neither joy nor pain, but, in perfect resignation to His holy will, have no other desire than to fulfil whatever that will may be.

If, then, O devout soul, you would please God, and live in this world a life of contentment, unite yourself ever and in every thing to the Divine will. Consider that all the sins which you have committed, when leading a life of disorder and distress, have come to pass in consequence of your having separated yourself from the will of God. Bind yourself up, from this day forward, with His good

pleasure; and always say, in every thing that may befall you: "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (St. Matt. xi. 26). Thus let it be, O Lord, since thus it is pleasing unto Thee. Whenever you feel yourself troubled on account of any occurrence of an adverse description, consider that it has come from God; and therefore say at once: 'Thus God wills,' and so remain in peace. "I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it" (Ps. xxxviii. 10). Lord, since Thou hast done it, I say nothing, and accept it. To this end you must direct all your thoughts and prayers; namely, to strive and pray ever unto God, in meditations, in communions, in visits to the Most Holy Sacrament, that He would make you accomplish His will. And ever be making an offering of yourself, saying: My God, behold, here I am; do what Thou wilt with me, and with all that I have. This was St. Teresa's continual exercise: fifty times a day at least did the saint offer herself to the Lord, that He might dispose of her according to His pleasure.

Oh, happy will you, my reader, be, if you act ever thus! You will certainly become a saint; your life will be one of peace; and your death will be one of greater happiness still. When any one is passing to the other life, all the hopes that are conceived of his salvation depend on the judgment formed as to whether he has died in resignation or no. If, after having, during life, welcomed to your embrace all things that have come from God, you in like manner embrace death also in order to accomplish His Divine will, you will certainly secure your salvation and die the death of a saint. Let us, then, abandon ourselves in every thing to the good pleasure of that Lord, who, being most wise, knows what is best for us; and being most loving, since He has sacrificed His life through love for us, wills also that which is most for our good. And let us, too, be thoroughly assured and convinced that, as St. Basil says, God lays Himself out for our good, incomparably beyond all that we ourselves could ever do or desire.

But let us now look at the matter in a more practical point of view, and consider what things there are in which

we have to bring ourselves into uniformity to the will of God. In the first place, we must have this uniformity as regards those things of nature which come to us from without; as when there is great heat, great cold, rain, scarcity, pestilence, and the like. We must take care not to say, What intolerable heat! what horrible cold! what a misfortune! how unlucky! what wretched weather! or other words expressive of repugnance to the will of God. We ought to will every thing to be as it is, since God is He who orders it all. St. Francis Borgia, on going one night to a house of the Society when the snow was falling, knocked at the door several times; but, the fathers being asleep, he was not let in. They made great lamentations in the morning for having kept him so long waiting in the open air; but the saint said, that during that time he had been greatly consoled by the thought that it was God who was casting down upon him those flakes of snow.

In the second place, we must have this uniformity as regards things which happen to us from within, as in the sufferings consequent on hunger, thirst, poverty, desolations, or disgrace. In all, we ought ever to say, 'Lord, be it Thine to make and to unmake: I am content; I will only what Thou dost will.' And thus too we ought, as F. Rodriguez says, to reply to such imaginary cases as the devil occasionally suggests to the mind, in order to make us fall into some consent that is wrong, or at least to disgust us. If such a person were to say so and so to you, if he were to do so and so to you, what would you say? what would you do? Let our answer always be: 'I would say and do that which God wills.' And by this means we shall keep ourselves free from all fault and molestation.

In the third place, if we have any natural defect either in mind or body,—a bad memory, slowness of apprehension, mean abilities, a crippled limb, or weak health,—let us not therefore make lamentation. What were our deserts, and what obligation had God to bestow upon us a mind more richly endowed, or a body more perfectly framed? Could He not have created us mere brute animals? or have left us in our own nothingness? Who is there that ever re-

ceives a gift, and tries to make bargains about it? Let us, then, return Him thanks for what, through a pure act of His goodness, He has bestowed upon us; and let us rest content with the manner in which He has treated us. Who can tell whether, if we had had a larger share of ability, stronger health, or greater personal attractions, we should not have possessed them to our destruction? How many there are whose ruin has been occasioned by their talents and learning, of which they have grown proud, and in consequence of which they have looked upon others with contempt,—a danger which is easily incurred by those who excel others in learning and ability! How many others there are whose personal beauty or bodily strength have furnished the occasions of plunging them into innumerable acts of wickedness! And, on the contrary, how many others there are who, in consequence of their poverty, or infirmity, or ugliness, have sanctified themselves and been saved; who, had they been rich, strong, or handsome, would have been damned! And thus let us ourselves rest content with that which God has given us: "But one thing is necessary" (St. Luke x. 42). Beauty is not necessary, nor health, nor sharpness of intellect; that which alone is necessary is our salvation.

In the fourth place, we must be particularly resigned under the pressure of corporal infirmities; and we must embrace them willingly, both in such a manner, and for such a time, as God wills. Nevertheless, we ought to employ the usual remedies; for this is what the Lord wills also: but if they do us no good, let us unite ourselves with the will of God, and this will do us much more good than health. O Lord, let us then say, I have no wish either to get well or to remain sick: I will only that which Thou dost will. Certainly the virtue is greater, if, in times of sickness, we do not complain of our sufferings; but when these press heavily upon us, it is not a fault to make them known to our friends, or even to pray God to liberate us from them. I am speaking now of sufferings that are severe; for, on the other hand, there are many who are very faulty in this, that on every trifling pain or weariness they would have the whole world come to compas-

Math. sionate them, and to shed tears around them. Even Jesus Christ, on seeing the near approach of His most bitter Passion, manifested to His disciples what He suffered: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 38); and He prayed the Eternal Father to liberate Him from it: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me" (*ibid.* v. 39). But Jesus Himself has taught us what we ought to do after praying in like manner; namely, straightway to resign ourselves to the Divine will, adding, as He did, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

How foolish, too, are those who say that they wish for health, not, indeed, in order to suffer, but to render greater service to God, by the observance of the rules, by serving the community, by going to church, by receiving Holy Communion, by doing penance, by study, by employing themselves in the saving of souls, by hearing confessions, and by preaching! But, my good friend, I wish you would tell me why it is that you desire to do these things? Is it to please God? And why go out of your way in order for this; certain, as you are, that what pleases God is, not that you pray, receive Communion, do acts of penance, study, or preach sermons, but that you suffer with patience the infirmity or the pains which He sees fit to send you? Unite, then, your own sufferings with those of Jesus Christ. But, you say, I am troubled, that, in consequence of being such an invalid, I am useless and burdensome to the community and to the house. But, as you resign yourself to the will of God, so you ought to believe that your superiors, too, resign themselves, seeing, as they do, that it is not through any laziness of your own, but through the will of God, that you have laid this burden upon the house. Ah, these desires and regrets do not spring from the love of God, but from the love of self, which is hunting after excuses for departing from the will of God! Is it our wish to give pleasure to God? Let us say, then, whenever we happen to be confined to our beds, to the Lord this only, "*Fiat voluntas Tua*," "Thy will be done." And let us be ever repeating it, although for the hundredth or thousandth time; and by this alone

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we shall give more pleasure to God than we could give Him by all the mortifications and devotions which we could perform. There is no better mode of serving God, than by cheerfully embracing His will. The Venerable Father Avila wrote thus to a priest who was an invalid: ("My friend, do not stop to calculate what you might do if you were well, but be content to remain unwell as long as God shall please. If your object be to do the will of God, how is it of more consequence for you to be well than ill?") And certainly this was wisely said; for God is not glorified so much by our works as by our resignation and conformity to His holy will. And therefore it was that St. Francis of Sales used to say, that we serve God more by suffering than by working.

It will often happen that we shall find ourselves without doctors and medicine; or, again, our medical attendant may not clearly understand our complaint; and here, too, we must be in a state of uniformity to the Divine will, which ordains it to be so for our good. It is related of one who had a devotion to St. Thomas of Canterbury, that, being unwell, he went to the tomb of the Saint to obtain his recovery. He returned home in good health: but then he said within himself, But if the sickness would have been a greater help towards my salvation, what benefit shall I gain from the health which I now have? With this thought in his mind, he went back to the tomb, and prayed the Saint to ask for him of God that which was the more expedient of the two for his eternal salvation; and after doing this he relapsed into the sickness, and remained in it with perfect contentment, holding it for certain that God ordained it to be so for his good. There is a similar anecdote related by Surius, of a certain blind man, who received his sight through the intercession of the Bishop St. Vedast; but afterwards prayed that, if that sight was not expedient for his soul, he might return to his former state of blindness; and after this prayer he continued blind as before. In times of sickness, then, it is best not to seek after health, either good or bad, but to abandon ourselves to the will of God, that He may dispose of us as pleases Him. But if health is what we would seek, let us

ask for it with resignation at least, and on the condition that health of body be suitable to the health of our soul; otherwise a prayer to this effect will be faulty, and rejected, because the Lord does not listen to prayers of this description when unaccompanied by resignation.

I call the time of sickness the touchstone by which spirits are tried, because in it is ascertained the value of the virtue of which any one stands possessed. If he does not lose his tranquillity, if he makes no complaints, and is not over-anxious, but obeys his medical advisers and his superiors, preserving throughout the same peacefulness of mind, in perfect resignation to the Divine will, it is a sign that he possesses great virtue. But what, then, ought one to say of the sick person who makes lamentation over himself, and says that he receives but little assistance from others; that his sufferings are intolerable; that he can find no remedy to do him good; that his medical man is ignorant; at times complaining even to God, that His hand presses, too heavily upon him? St. Bonaventure relates, in his Life of St. Francis, that when the saint was suffering pains of an extraordinary severity, one of his religious, who was somewhat over simple, said to him: 'Father, pray to God to treat you with a little more gentleness; for it seems that He lays His hand upon you too heavily.' St. Francis, on hearing this, cried aloud, and said to him in reply: 'Listen; if I did not know that these words of yours were the offspring of mere simplicity, I would never see you more,—daring, as you have done, to find fault with the judgments of God.' And after saying this, extremely enfeebled and emaciated through his sickness though he was, he threw himself from his bed upon the floor, and kissing it, he said: 'Lord, I thank Thee for all the sufferings which Thou sendest me. I pray Thee to send me more of them, if it so please Thee. It is my delight for Thee to afflict me, and not to spare me in the least degree, because the fulfilment of Thy will is the greatest consolation which in this life I can receive.'

Under this head we must also class the loss which we may at times have to suffer of persons who, in either a temporal or spiritual point of view, happen to be of service

to us. This is a matter in regard to which those who are devout are often very faulty, through their want of resignation to the Divine dispensations. Our sanctification must come to us, not from spiritual directors, but from God. It is, indeed, His will that we should avail ourselves of directors as spiritual guides, when He gives them to us; but when He takes them away, He wills that we should rest content with this, and increase our confidence in His goodness; saying at such times: Lord, it is Thou who hast given me this assistance; now Thou hast taken it from me; may Thy will be ever done; but I pray Thee now to supply my wants Thyself, and to teach me what I ought to do to serve Thee. And in the same way ought we to receive all other crosses from the hands of God. But so many troubles, you say, are chastisements. But, I ask in reply, are not the chastisements which God sends us in this life acts of kindness and benefits? If we have offended Him, we have to satisfy the Divine justice in some way or other, either in this life or in the next. Therefore we ought all of us to say with St. Augustine, 'Here burn, here cut, here do not spare; that so Thou mayest spare in eternity:' and again, with holy Job: "And that this may be my comfort, that, afflicting me with sorrow, He spare not" (Job vi. 10). It ought, too, to be a consolation to one who has deserved hell to see that God is punishing him in this world; because this ought to give him good hopes that it may be God's will to deliver him from punishment eternal. Let us, then, say, when suffering the chastisements of God, what was said by Heli the high priest: "It is the Lord; let Him do what is good in His sight" (1 Kings iii. 18).

Moreover, we ought to be resigned in times of spiritual desolation. The Lord is accustomed, when a soul gives itself up to the spiritual life, to heap consolations upon it, in order to wean it from the pleasures of the world; but afterwards, when He sees it more settled in spiritual ways, He draws back His hand, in order to make proof of its love, and to see whether it serves and loves Him uncompensated, while in this world, with spiritual joys. 'While we are living here,' as St. Teresa used to say,

‘our gain does not consist in any increase of our enjoyment of God, but in the performance of His will.’ And in another passage: ‘The love of God does not consist in tendernesses, but in serving Him with firmness and humility.’ And again, elsewhere: ‘The Lord makes trial of those who love Him by means of drynesses and temptations.’ Let, then, the soul thank the Lord when He caresses it with sweetnesses; but not torment itself by acts of impatience, when it beholds itself left in a state of desolation. This is a point which should be well attended to; for some foolish persons, seeing themselves in a state of aridity, think that God may have abandoned them; or, again, that the spiritual life was not made for them; and so they leave off prayer, and lose all that they have gained. There is no time better for exercising our resignation to the will of God than that of dryness. I am not saying that you will not suffer pain on seeing yourself bereft of the sensible presence of your God; it is impossible for a soul not to feel such pain as this; nor can it refrain from lamentation, when our Redeemer Himself upon the cross made lamentation on this account: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.) But, in its sufferings, it should ever resign itself perfectly to the will of its Lord. These spiritual desolations and abandonments are what all the Saints have suffered. “What hardness of heart,” said St. Bernard, “do I not experience! I no longer find any delight in reading, no longer any pleasure in meditation or in prayer.” The condition of the Saints has been ordinarily one of dryness, not of sensible consolations. These are things which the Lord does not bestow, excepting on rare occasions, and to perhaps the weaker sort of spirits, in order to prevent their coming to a standstill in their spiritual course: the joys which He proposes as rewards, He prepares for us in Paradise. This world is the place for meriting, where we merit by suffering; heaven is the place for recompenses and enjoyments. Therefore, what the Saints have desired and sought for in this world has been, not a sensible fervour with rejoicing, but a spiritual fervour with suffering. The Ven. ~~John~~ Avila used to say: “Oh, how much better is it to be in dryness and

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temptations with the will of God, than in contemplation without it!”

But, you will say, if I could only know that this desolation comes from God, I should be content; but what afflicts and disquiets me is, the fear that it may have come through my own fault, and as a punishment for my tepidity. Well, then, take your tepidity out of the way, and employ greater diligence. But will you, because you are perhaps under a cloud,—will you therefore disquiet yourself, leave off prayer, and thus double the evil of which you complain? Let it be that, as you say, the dryness is come upon you as a chastisement. Then accept it as a chastisement on one who so much deserves to be chastised, and unite yourself with the Divine will. Do you not say that you are deserving of hell? And why, then, are you complaining? Perhaps it is because you deserve that God should give you consolations? Ah, go and rest content with the manner in which God is dealing with you; persevere in prayer, and in the way on which you have entered; and from henceforth let it be your fear that your complaints may arise from your little humility and your little resignation to the will of God. When a soul applies itself to prayer, it can derive no benefit from it that can be greater than the union of itself with the Divine will. Therefore make an act of resignation, and say: Lord, I accept this pain from Thy hands, and I accept it for as long as may please Thee; if it be Thy will that I should be thus afflicted for all eternity, I am content. And in this way your prayer, painful though it may be, will be a greater help to you than any consolation, however sweet.

We must, however, bear it in mind, that dryness is not always a punishment, but is occasionally ordained by God for our greater good, and in order to keep us humble. That St. Paul might not grow proud of the gifts which he had received, the Lord permitted him to be tormented by temptations of impurity: “Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me” (2 Cor. xii. 7). He who prays in times of sweetness does no great thing: “There is a friend, a companion at table; and he will not

abide in the day of distress" (Ecclus. vi. 10). You would not esteem to be a true friend of yours the man who was with you only at your table; but him who assisted you in times of trouble, and without advantage to any interests of his own. When God sends darkness and desolations, it is then that He is trying who are true friends of His. Palladius suffered a great weariness in prayer; and when he went to tell St. Macarius, the latter said to him, "When the thought suggests itself to you that you should leave off prayer, let this be your reply: I am content, for the love of Jesus Christ, to remain here as guardian of the walls of this cell." This, then, is your answer, whenever you feel yourself tempted to leave off prayer, because it appears to you as no better than a mere waste of time: "I am here in order to give pleasure to God." St. Francis of Sales used to say, that if in time of prayer we did no more than drive away distractions and temptations, our prayer would, nevertheless, be well made. Nay, Taulerus says, that on him who perseveres in prayer in a state of aridity, God will bestow greater graces than had he prayed much with great sensible devotion. F. Rodriguez tells us of a certain person who used to say, that during forty years of prayer he had never experienced any consolation; but that on such days as he prayed, he found himself strong in virtue; whereas, on the contrary, on whatever day he omitted it, he experienced such a weakness as made him unfit for any thing that was good. It is observed by S. Bonaventure and by Gerson, that many serve God more in the absence of the recollection they desire, than if they had possessed it; because they thus live in a state of greater diligence and humility; whereas otherwise they might perhaps become proud and more tepid, thinking that they had already gained the object of their desire. And what is said with regard to aridity, must also be said of temptations. We ought to try to avoid temptations; but if God wills or permits that we be tempted against the faith, against purity, or against any other virtue, we ought not to complain, but resign ourselves in this also to the Divine will. To St. Paul, who prayed to be released from his temptation to impurity, the Lord made answer: "My

grace is sufficient for thee." And so, if we see that God does not listen to us, by releasing us from some troublesome temptation, let us likewise say: Lord, do and permit that which pleaseth Thee; Thy grace is sufficient for me; only grant me Thy assistance, that I may never lose it. It is not temptations, but the consenting to temptations, that is the cause of our losing the Divine grace. Temptations, when we overcome them, keep us more humble, gain for us greater merits, make us have recourse to God more frequently; and thus keep us further from offending Him, and unite us more closely to His holy love.

Lastly, we must unite ourselves with the will of God in regard to our death, and as to the time and the manner in which He will send it. St. Gertrude one day, when climbing up a hill, slipped down, and fell into a ravine. Her companions asked her afterwards whether she would not have been afraid to die without the Sacraments? The Saint replied: "It is my great desire to die with the Sacraments; but I consider that the will of God is more to be accounted of, because I hold that the best disposition one could have for making a good death would be one's submission to that which God might will: consequently, I desire whatever death my Lord shall be pleased to allot me." It is related by St. Gregory, in his Dialogues, that the Vandals having condemned to death a certain priest named Santolo, they granted him the liberty of choosing the kind of death which he would prefer; but the holy man refused to make a selection, saying, 'I am in the hands of God, and will suffer the death which He shall permit you to make me suffer; nor do I wish for any other than that.' This act was so pleasing to God, that, when these barbarous men had resolved on having his head cut off, He held back the executioner's arm; whereupon they gave in to so great a miracle, and spared his life.¹⁷ As to the manner, then, we ought to esteem that death to be the best for us which God may have determined shall be ours. Save us, Lord (let us ever say, when thinking of our death); and then let us die in whatever manner seemeth good unto Thee.

Thus, again, we ought to unite our will with His as to

the time of our death. What is this world but a prison for us to suffer in, and to be in danger every moment of losing God? It was this which caused David to exclaim: "Bring my soul out of prison" (Ps. cxlii. 8). It was this fear which made St. Teresa sigh for death; on hearing the clock strike, she felt the utmost consolation in the thought that an hour of her life had passed, an hour of her danger of losing God. Father Avila used to say, that every one with imperfect dispositions ought to desire death, because of the danger in which we live of losing the Divine grace.

What is more precious, or more to be desired, than by a good death to secure to ourselves the impossibility of losing the grace of our God? But, you say, "I have as yet done nothing; there is nothing that I have gained for my soul." But if it be the will of God for your life to terminate at this time, what would you do afterwards, if you were to remain alive contrary to that will of His? And who knows whether, in that case, you would make such a death as you can have hopes of making now? Who knows whether, through a change of will, you might not fall into other sins, and involve yourself in damnation? And even were there nothing else, yet by remaining alive you could not live without committing at least venial sins. Hence St. Bernard exclaims: "Why, oh, why do we wish for a life in which the longer we live, the more we sin?"¹⁸ And it is certain that one single venial sin displeases God more than all the good works which we can do please Him.

I say, moreover, that he who has but little desire for Paradise shows that he has but little love for God. One who loves desires the presence of the object loved: but we cannot see God without leaving this world; and therefore it is that all the Saints have sighed for death, in order to go and see the Lord whom they have loved. Thus did Augustine sigh, "Oh, may I die, that I may see thee!" Thus, too, St. Paul, "Having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). Thus, again, David: "When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. xli. 3.) And in like manner, too, all the souls that have been enamoured of God. It is related by a certain writer,¹⁹ that one day as a gentleman was out hunting in a forest, he

heard a man singing sweetly; on going in that direction, he found a poor leper in a state of semi-putrefaction: he asked him if it was he who was singing? "Yes," replied he, "it was I, sir, who was singing."²⁰ "And how can you ever be singing and contented under sufferings like these, which are taking your life away?" The leper replied: "There is nothing to stand between my Lord God and myself but this wall of clay, which is my body; when this impediment is removed, I shall go to enjoy my God. And seeing, as I do, that it is falling into pieces every day, I therefore rejoice and sing."

Finally, even as regards our degrees in grace and glory, we must bring our own will into uniformity to the Divine. Highly as we ought to value the things of the glory of God, we ought to value His will yet more. It is right for us to desire to love Him more than the Seraphim do, but it is not right for us to go on to wish for any other degree of love than that which the Lord has determined on granting us. Father Avila says, "I do not believe that there was ever a saint who did not desire to be better than he was. But it has not deprived any one of them of his peace; because this desire of theirs had not relation to any cravings of their own, but to God; with whose measures of distribution they rested content, although He might have given them less than others; out of true love deeming that contentment with what God gave them had a greater value than the desire of possessing much."²⁰ "It all comes to this, as F. Rodriguez explains it, that although we ought to be diligent to attain the greatest perfection in our power, that our own lukewarmness and laziness may not be furnished with an excuse, as in the case of those who say, God has to give me what I need,—I can only do so much; nevertheless, when we fall short, we ought not to lose our peace and conformity to the will of God, which has permitted the failing on our part, nor our courage either. Let us raise ourselves up immediately from our fall; let us humble ourselves in acts of penance; and, seeking for greater assistance from God, let us pursue our course. So, in like manner, although we may rightly desire to be added in heaven to the choir of the Seraphim; not, indeed, that we

may have the more glory for ourselves, but in order to give greater glory to God, and that we may love Him the more; we ought, nevertheless, to resign ourselves to His holy will, contenting ourselves with that degree which, through His mercy, He shall vouchsafe to grant us.

It would, moreover, be but too evident a fault to desire to possess gifts of supernatural prayer,—such, more especially, as ecstasies, visions, and revelations; whereas, on the contrary, spiritual writers say, that those souls on which God bestows the favour of such-like graces ought to pray Him to deprive them of them, in order that they may love Him by the way of pure faith, which is the safest way. There are many who have attained perfection without these supernatural graces. Those only are virtues which raise the soul to sanctity; and chief among their number stands uniformity to the will of God. If God does not choose to raise us to a high degree of perfection and of glory, let us conform ourselves in all respects to His holy will, praying to Him that He would at least save us through His mercy. And if we act in this manner, the reward will not be small which, of His goodness, our good Lord will give us; loving above every thing, as He does, those souls that are resigned.

In short, we ought to regard all things that do or will happen to us as proceeding from God's hands; and every thing that we do we ought to direct to this one end, the fulfilment of His will, and to do it simply because God wills it to be done. And in order to our going on with the greater security in this, we must follow the guidance of our superiors as regards what is external, and of our directors with regard to what is internal, that so we may, through them, understand what it is that God desires of us, having great faith in those words of Jesus Christ to us: "He that heareth you heareth Me" (St. Luke x. 16). And, above all, let it be our study to serve God in the way in which it is His will that we should serve Him. I say this, that we may shun the deception practised upon himself by one who loses his time, amusing himself by saying: "If I were in a desert, if I were to enter into a monastery, if I were to go somewhere, so as not to remain in this house, to a distance from these relations or these companions of mine,—I

would sanctify myself; I would do such and such penance; I would make such and such prayers." He says, "I would do, I would do," but in the meantime, through his bearing with a bad will the cross which God sends him,—in short, through his not walking in the way that God wills for him,—he not only does not sanctify himself, but goes on from bad to worse. These desires are temptations of the devil, at such times as they shall not be in accordance with the will of God; we must therefore drive them away, and brace ourselves up to the service of God in that one way which He has chosen for us. By doing His will, we shall certainly sanctify ourselves in any state wherein God places us. Let us, then, ever will that only which God wills, that so He may take and press us to His Heart; and, for this end, let us make ourselves familiar with some of those passages of Scripture which call upon us to unite ourselves ever more and more with the Divine will: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" My God, tell me what Thou desirest of me; for I desire to do it all. "I am Thine: save Thou me" (Ps. cxviii. 94). O my Lord! I am no longer my own, but Thine; do with me whatsoever Thou dost please. And at such times especially as any very grievous calamity befalls us,—as in the case of the death of parents, of the loss of property, and things of a similar kind,—"Yea, Father" (let it ever be ours to say), "yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (St. Matt. xi. 26). Yes, my God and my Father, let it be even so; for so it hath pleased Thee. And, above all, let us love that prayer which Jesus Christ has taught us: "*Fiat voluntas Tua sicut in celo et in terra*," "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The Lord told St. Catherine of Genoa, that whenever she said the "Our Father," she was to pay particular attention to these words, and pray that His holy will might be fulfilled by her with the same perfection with which it is fulfilled by the saints in heaven. Let us, too, act in this manner, and we shall certainly become saints ourselves.

May the Divine will, and the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, be ever loved and praised!

[REST FOR SCRUPULOUS SOULS]

IN

OBEDIENCE TO THEIR DIRECTOR.

ALL the anxiety of scrupulous persons consists in the fear lest, in what they do, they are not acting with scruple merely, but with real doubt as to the act being simple, and are therefore incurring sin. But the chief thing they ought to consider is this: that he who acts in obedience to a learned and pious confessor, acts not only with no doubt, but with the greatest security that can be had upon earth,—on the Divine words of Jesus Christ, that he who hears His ministers is as though he heard Himself: “He that heareth you heareth Me” (St. Luke x. 16); whence St. Bernard says, “Whatever man enjoins in the place of God, provided it be not certainly displeasing to God, is altogether to be received as though enjoined by God.”²²

It is certain that, as to the personal direction of conscience, the confessor is the lawful superior, as St. Francis of Sales,²³ with all spiritual instructors, declares; while F. Pinamonti, in his *Spiritual Director*, says: “It is well to make the scrupulous perceive, that submitting their will to the ministers of the Lord provides them the greatest security in all that is not manifestly sin. Let them read the lives of the saints, and they will find that they knew no safer road than obedience. The saints plainly trusted more to the voice of their confessor than to the immediate voice of God; and yet the scrupulous would lean more on their own judgment than on the Gospel, which assures them, “He that heareth you heareth Me.”

The Blessed Henry Suso says, that ‘God demands no account from us of things done under obedience.’²⁴ St. Philip

Neri says the same: ‘Let such as desire to advance in the way of God submit themselves to a learned confessor, and obey him in God’s stead; let him who thus acts assure himself that he will have to render no account to God for his actions.’²⁵ He says, moreover, that one should have all faith in one’s confessor, on the ground that God would not permit him to err; and that there is nothing which more surely cuts asunder the snares of the devil than to do the will of another in what is good, nor any thing more full of danger than to be guiding ourselves according to what seems best to us; which is confirmed by St. John of the Cross, who says, in the name of the Lord: ‘When thou art unfaithful to confessors, thou art so unto Me, who have said, He that despiseth you despiseth Me.’ And again: ‘Not to rest satisfied with what the confessor says is pride and failure in faith.’²⁶

We are, therefore, to have this certain confidence, that each person, in obeying his spiritual father, may be sure of not sinning. ‘The sovereign remedy for the scrupulous,’ says St. Bernard, ‘is a blind obedience to their confessor.’²⁷ John Gerson relates, that the same St. Bernard told one of his disciples, who was scrupulous, to go and celebrate, and take his word for it. He went, and was cured of his scruples.²⁸ ‘But a person may answer,’ says Gerson, ‘would to God I had a St. Bernard for my director! but mine is one of indifferent wisdom.’ And he answers: ‘Thou dost err, whoever thou art that so speakest; for thou hast not given thyself into the hands of the man because he is well read, &c., but because he is placed over thee; wherefore obey him not as man, but as God.’ For this reason St. Teresa well said: ‘Let the soul accept the confessor with a determination to think no more of personal excuses, but to trust in the words of the Lord, “He that heareth you heareth Me.” The Lord so highly values this submission, that when, in spite of a thousand inward conflicts, and considering the decision to be an absurd one, we execute it nevertheless, cost us what it may, the Lord so assists us,’ &c.;²⁹ and she goes on to say, that we then comply with His Divine will.

Hence St. Francis of Sales, speaking of direction from a spiritual father in order to walk securely in the way of

God, says: 'This is the very counsel of all counsels.'³⁰ 'Search as much as you will,' says the devout Avila, 'you will in no way discover the will of God so surely as by the path of that humble obedience which is so much recommended and practised by the devout of former times.' Thus, too, Alvarez said: 'Even if the spiritual father should err, the obedient soul is secure from error, because she rests on the judgment of him whom God has given her as a superior.' And F. Nieremberg writes to the same effect: 'Let the soul obey the confessor; and then, although the thing itself were matter of fault, he does not sin who does it with the intention of obeying him who holds to him the place of God, persuading himself (as is, indeed, the case) that he is bound to obey him;' forasmuch as (according to the words of F. Rogacci and F. Lessius) the confessor is to us the interpreter of the Divine will.³¹ And this is confirmed also by the gloss:³² 'But if what is prescribed be of a doubtful kind, the virtue of obedience exempts from sin, although the thing in itself be evil;' and in the chapter *Inquisitioni, de Sent. exc.*, from the same text, obedience to the confessor is enjoined, when it says that scruples 'ought to be dismissed at the judgment of one's pastor.'

St. Francis of Sales gives three maxims of great consolation to the scrupulous: '1. An obedient soul has never been lost; 2. We ought to rest satisfied with knowing from our spiritual father that we are going on well, without seeking a personal knowledge of it; 3. The best thing is to walk on blindly through all the darkness and perplexity of this life, under the providence of God.'³³ And therefore all the doctors of morals conclude, in general, with St. Antoninus, Navarro, Silvester, &c., that obedience to the confessor is the safest rule for walking well in the ways of God. F. Tirillo and F. La Croix say that this is the common doctrine of the holy fathers and masters of the spiritual life.³⁴

In the second place, the scrupulous should know, not only that they are safe in obeying, but that they are bound to obey their director, and to despise the scruple, acting with all freedom in the midst of their doubts. This is the teaching of Natalis Alexander:³⁵ 'That scruples ought to be despised when one has the judgment of a prudent, pious,

and learned director; and that one ought to act against them is plain from the chapter *Inquisitioni, &c.*, as above; and of Father Wigandt: 'He who acts against scruples does not sin; nay, sometimes it is a precept to do so, especially when backed by the judgment of the confessor.'³⁶ So do these authors speak, although they belong to the rigid school; so, too, the doctors in general;³⁷ and the reason is, that if the scrupulous lives in his scruples, he is in danger of placing grievous impediments in the way of satisfying his obligations, or, at least, of making any spiritual progress; and, moreover, of going out of his mind, losing his health, and destroying his conscience by despair or by relaxation. Hence St. Antoninus agrees with Gerson in thus reproving the scrupulous, who, through a vain fear, is not obedient in overcoming his scruples: 'Beware lest, from overmuch desire to walk securely, thou fall and destroy thyself.'³⁸

For this reason F. Wigandt also says, that the scrupulous ought to obey his director in all cases where the precept is not plainly sin,—'unless the director enjoin what is manifestly against God';³⁹ and it is the general and undoubted decision among doctors, that in things doubtful each is bound to obey him who is placed over him, so that it be not evidently sin. This is proved by St. Bernard, in a passage quoted at the commencement; and by St. Ignatius Loyola, who says: 'There must be obedience in all things in which no sin is perceived,—that is, in which there is not manifest sin.'⁴⁰ Also by Blessed Humbert, General of the Friars Preachers, who says: 'Unless the precept be plainly evil, it is to be received as though enjoined by God.'⁴¹ Moreover, by Blessed Denys the Carthusian: 'In things doubtful as to whether or no they are against the Divine precept, one must stand by the precept of him who is set over one; because, although it should be against the precept of God, yet, in virtue of obedience, the person under direction sins not.'⁴² Of the same opinion is St. Bonaventure.⁴³

This makes Gerson say: 'The scrupulous are to act against their scruples, and plant their feet firmly in resisting them. We cannot set scruples to rest better than by

despising them; and, as a general rule, not without the advice of another, and especially our superior. Otherwise, either ill-regulated fear or inconsiderate presumption will be our fall.⁴⁴ 'With a firm foot,' says he, 'they ought to overcome the scruple.' And so the remedy that St. Philip Neri gave the scrupulous was, to make them despise their scruples. It is thus written in his life: 'Moreover, besides the general remedy of committing one's self altogether and for every thing to the judgment of the confessor, he gave another,—by exhorting his penitents to despise their scruples. Hence he forbade such persons to confess often; and when, in confession, they entered upon their scruples, he used to send them to communion without hearing them.'⁴⁵

So, then, in conclusion, the scrupulous ought to set before himself obedience, and look upon his scrupulous fear as vain, and so act with freedom. Nor does this require (say the doctors Busenbaum,⁴⁶ with Sanchez and others,) that in each particular act he should expressly determine that the thing is a scruple, and that he ought to obey his confessor in despising it; it is enough that he act against it in virtue of a judgment made beforehand, since, from his past experience, the same judgment resides in his conscience habitually or virtually, though dim and confused. Hence La Croix⁴⁷ and Tamburini,⁴⁸ together with Vasquez, Val., &c., add, that if the scrupulous be unable amid that darkness to lay aside his scruple at once, or call clearly to mind the obedience laid on him by the confessor,—which some anxious consciences are disabled from doing, perplexed as they are how to put by their scruple, by reason of the fear that weighs upon them,—in that case he does not sin, though he act with a positive fear of sinning; and for this reason, that as he has already passed a like judgment upon former scruples, and on the duty of obeying the injunction given him to despise them, he ought assuredly to believe himself to possess it now also, though, from the force of his fear, he does not perceive it. But the scrupulous ought at such a time to despise the fear, inasmuch as it forms no true verdict of conscience. Hear how Gerson openly confirms this point, and what advice he gives: 'A formed conscience is, when, after discussion and deliberation, a de-

finite sentence of the reason judges that a thing is to be done or to be avoided; and to act against this is a sin: but fear or scruple of conscience is, when the mind wavers in doubt, not knowing which of two things it is bound to do, and yet would not omit whatever it could ascertain to be agreeable to the Divine will; and this fear is as much as possible to be cast away and quenched.'⁴⁹ In fact, then, Gerson says that a person sins by acting under a practical doubt, when the doubt proceeds from a formed conscience; but that this formed conscience is when, after examining the circumstances, he deliberately judges with a definitive sentence on what he is obliged and what he is forbidden to do; and he sins by acting against such a conscience as this. But that, when the mind is doubtful and wavering, and yet would not do any thing that was displeasing to God,—this, says Gerson, is no true doubtfulness, but a vain fear, which ought as much as possible to be cast away and despised. So that when there certainly exists in the scrupulous person the habitual will not to offend God, it is certain (according to Gerson), that while he acts in his doubtfulness he does not sin; and with reason, since it is then not a true doubt, although he may apprehend it to be a doubt, but a vain fear.

On the other hand, it is certain, that for the commission of a mortal sin there is required a full perception on the part of the reason, and a complete deliberate consent on the part of the will, and to will something which grievously offends God. This doctrine is undoubted, and common to all the theologians,⁵⁰ and even to the most rigid,—as Juenin, Habert, and that most rigorous of all, Genet, who speaks thus: 'But if (the act) contain only an imperfect degree of deliberation, the sin will be venial, not mortal.'⁵¹ And this, too, is the teaching of all the rest, with St. Thomas, who says: 'That which is mortal may be venial, owing to the act being imperfect, since it does not absolutely amount to the perfection of a moral act, being not deliberate, but sudden.'⁵²

Let scrupulous souls, then, suffer this cross of theirs with resignation, and not perplex themselves in the greatest distresses which God may send or permit. It is for their profit,

to the end that they may be humbler, may guard better against such occasions as are beyond doubt and seriously dangerous, may commend themselves oftener to the Lord, and put a more entire trust in the Divine goodness. Meanwhile let them often have recourse to the most holy Virgin Mary, who is called, and is in truth, the Mother of Mercy, and comforter of the afflicted. Let them, indeed, fear to offend God, wherever they do in truth discern what will offend Him; but if only they are steadfast in resolving rather to die a thousand times than lose the grace of God, let them, above all things, fear lest they fail in obedience to their directors. On the other hand, while they blindly obey, they may assure themselves of not being abandoned by that Lord who will have all men saved, and who, loving goodwill as He does, never suffers a really obedient soul to perish.

"No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii. 11).

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you" (1 St. Pet. v. 7).

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.)

"In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest; for Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope" (Ps. iv. 9, 10).

"In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded" (Ps. xxx. 1).

COUNSELS,

FROM WHICH A SOUL, WHEN IN DESOLATION, MAY DERIVE
COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE.

A Spiritual Conference

BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND ONE WHO SEEKS HIS ADVICE WHEN
SUBJECTED BY GOD TO SPIRITUAL TRIBULATIONS.

Question. Let me hear what these troubles of conscience are, which, as you tell me, keep you in a state of such affliction.

Answer. Father, it is now about three years since I began to suffer such dryness and desolation of spirit as to prevent my finding God either in prayer or before the Sacrament of the altar, or in my communions. I seem to be a soul without love, without hope, and without faith,—abandoned, in short, by God. Neither the Passion of Jesus Christ nor the Holy Eucharist any longer affect me; I am become insensible to devotion of every kind. I confess that it is all on account of my sins, for which I deserve nothing short of hell.

Q. You tell me, in short, that you have now been for a long time in a state of aridity. In order to give you an answer adequate to your need, it is necessary that I should know whether this aridity of yours is voluntary or involuntary. Let me explain myself. It is 'voluntary aridity' when a person commits voluntary and deliberate faults, and takes no pains to amend. This is not, properly speaking, to be called aridity, but tepidity, from which if the soul does not exert itself to get free, it will ever be going on from bad to worse; and God grant that, in course of time, it may not fall into more serious disasters: aridity of this kind is a slow fever, which does not cause death im-

mediately, but to a certainty brings it on. Whereas aridity is 'involuntary' when a person makes it his study to walk in the way of perfection, keeps on his guard against deliberate faults, frequently prays, and goes to the sacraments; and, with all this, feels himself dry of spirit. To come to our present case: you have mentioned the sins of your past life; and, I ask, have you not made these sins the subject of confession?

A. Yes, father; I have not only made a general confession of them, but I have confessed them many times over.

Q. And what does your director say?

A. He has forbidden me to make further mention of what belongs to my past life; but I always feel disquieted, continually fearing that I may not have explained myself sufficiently. I am, moreover, tormented by thousands of temptations to unbelief, impurity, and pride. I drive them away; but still am ever in fear lest I may in some way have tacitly consented to them.

Q. And what does your director say with regard to this other head of bad thoughts?

A. He wishes me not to confess them, excepting when I could with certainty make oath, at first sight, that I had consented to them. What do you, father, tell me? Give me some instruction for my comfort.

Q. What do I tell you? I tell you that you ought more implicitly to trust in obedience to your director. Have you read that instruction of St. Philip Neri, that he who acts in obedience to his confessor may rest assured that he will not have to render an account to God of the things which he does? The saint used to say, besides, that 'one should have faith in one's confessor, for God would not leave him in error; and that there is nothing more sure to defeat the designs of the devil than obedience to one's spiritual father as regards what relates to God; whereas, on the contrary, there is nothing more dangerous than the will to be guided by one's own opinion.' Have you read what St. Francis of Sales says, when speaking on the subject of obedience to one's director? 'Of all counsels this is the chief.' 'Search as much as you will,' says the devout Avila, 'and you

will never so surely find out the will of God as by the way of this humble obedience, which was so much recommended and practised by all the devout in the early ages.' We find the same also in the writings of St. Teresa, who says: 'Let the soul choose its confessor with the determination to take no further thought for itself, but to place its trust in the words of the Lord, "He that heareth you heareth Me." So great is the value which God sets on this submission, that, even in spite of a thousand conflicts, and though it appears to ourselves that his judgment is wrong, let us, whether it costs us suffering or no, act according to it, and thus fulfil the Divine will.' St. John of the Cross, too, says (speaking in the name of Jesus Christ): 'When you are unfaithful to your confessor, you are so to Me, who have said, "He that despiseth you despiseth Me."' And then he adds these words: 'Not to rest satisfied with what one's confessor says is pride and want of faith.' The saint speaks thus on account of those words of Jesus Christ, which have been quoted above, "He that heareth you heareth Me;" and hence, too, it was that St. Francis of Sales set down these other most useful maxims: '1. One who is truly obedient is never lost. 2. We should rest satisfied with knowing from our spiritual father that we are going on well, without searching for the reasons on which that judgment of his is formed.' (An excellent instruction this for those scrupulous people who wish to find out the reasons for what their spiritual father enjoins them.) 3. St. Francis adds another excellent maxim, as a consequence of the foregoing, saying, 'It is best for us in this life to go on blindly, under Divine Providence, in a state of darkness and perplexity.' This instruction to be obedient to one's spiritual father in doubts of conscience is, moreover, that which is given by all the doctors of the Church, and by all the holy Fathers; for all the rest of whom let St. Bernard suffice, saying, as he does, that whatever is imposed by man acting on behalf of God, provided only it be not certainly a sin, should not be regarded otherwise than as the command of God Himself: 'Whatever precept is given by man when representing God, and is not such as certainly to be displeasing unto Him, is to be by no means otherwise received than as the precept

of God.' In short, obedience to His consecrated ministers is the one safest remedy which Jesus Christ has left us for quieting the doubts of conscience, and we ought to return Him the greatest thanks for it; for how could a scrupulous soul, in its doubts, find perfect rest otherwise? This tribulation of scruples—and for those who love God it has far greater torments than all other afflictions of infirmity, persecutions, and the like—is what almost all the saints have had to suffer,—St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, St. Frances of Chantal, and many others besides; and how have they obtained tranquillity, excepting by obedience? Now, what have you to say? Are you satisfied that, in obeying your director, you are going on safely?

A. Yes, father, I am persuaded of this; but how does it happen, that in a course of obedience persevered in for even two whole years, I experience nothing in the way of devotion?

Q. Now, then, I understand what is your defect, and why it is that, as you say, you do not find peace. Is the will of God the object of your search, or are not consolations and spiritual sweetnesses the things that you are seeking for? If you wish to sanctify yourself, seek only, from this day forth, the will of God, whose will it is that you become a saint, but who will not maintain you in this life in a state of consolation. If you have not consolation itself, console yourself with the hope of having with you Him who is the Consoler. Is it of having suffered two years of dryness that you complain? It was forty years of dryness that St. Frances of Chantal suffered. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi suffered five years of pains and temptations without the smallest alleviation; and, at the end of those five years, she herself prayed to God that He would not grant her, in this world, any sensible consolations more. St. Philip Neri was so much inflamed with Divine love, and yet he used to say: 'My Jesus, I have never yet loved Thee, and I would wish to love Thee.' At another time he would say: 'As yet I do not know Thee, O my Jesus! for I am seeking Thee.' Again, he would say: 'I would wish to love Thee, O my Jesus! and I find not the way. I seek for Thee, and I find Thee not.' This is the way in which

the saints speak; and why do you alarm yourself so because you are in a state of dryness, and do not find God as you would wish to find Him?

A. But these were saints; whereas I know not whether God has yet pardoned the many sins whereby I have offended Him, as I cannot be sure of having had a true sorrow for them.

Q. But what is the matter now? Perhaps it is that you take complacency in the thought of the sins which you have committed?

A. No; I detest them; I hate them more than death.

Q. And why do you fear that God may not have pardoned you? The holy Fathers say, that he who hates the sins he has committed is sure of forgiveness from God; and, besides, it is certain, as St. Teresa says, that 'he who is resolved to die rather than offend God, is, without a doubt, penitent for his past offences against Him.' Tell me, are you resolved to endure sufferings of every description rather than lose the Divine grace?

A. Yes, my father; by the grace of God, I am resolved to let myself be torn to pieces sooner than commit, with eyes open to it, a single sin, even though it were a venial one.

Q. Well, then, what reason is there why God should hate you? You are afraid lest God hates you. Oh, if you only saw the love which He is now bearing towards you, you would this very moment drop down dead here where you are standing out of mere consolation! Do you not know that Jesus Christ is that good Shepherd who has come into the world to give life, and to save every poor sheep of His flock, even though voluntarily lost? And how, then, is it His will to abandon one of those sheep of His, who is ready to die sooner than deliberately cause Him the least possible displeasure?

A. But who knows whether I may not have consented to some grievous sin, and God have abandoned me on this account?

Q. No; you are not speaking well. Mortal sin is so horrible a monster, that it is impossible for a sin of this kind to be in the soul without the soul's being aware of it.

No sinner who is out of God's grace has any doubts about it, but is certain that he has lost it; and therefore it is an established maxim with all the masters of the spiritual life, that when a person who fears God doubts whether he has not lost the Divine grace, it is certain that he has not lost it; for the very reason, that no one loses God without knowing it for certain; and thus, whenever you are in doubt about having lost God, be sure that you have not lost Him.

A. But why is it that I feel so devoid of confidence?

Q. Listen. You know that true confidence consists not in feeling it, but in willing it. Have you the will to put your trust in God? If you have the will to confide in Him, you have already confidence itself.

A. But where is my love for God?

Q. As regards love for God, the same rule holds good which holds with regard to confidence. Love, too, is in the will. Have you the will to love God? If it is your will to love Him, understand that you already love Him. You would like to have the consolation of feeling the confidence and the love; but God, for your greater good, does not will that you should be consoled by feeling this confidence and this love of yours. Be content, therefore, to possess without feeling it. I tell you the same thing with regard to faith also: it is enough that you have the will to believe whatsoever the Church teaches you, without desiring to feel that you believe. There will come a time when the clouds will clear away, and the light will arise, which will make your consolation twofold. Meanwhile, be content to remain in the dark, and to abandon yourself to the hand of God's Divine will and mercy. Let us take the Divine Scriptures for our comfort during this interval. In one place God says: "Turn to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you" (Zach. i. 3). If, then, we wish for God, let us take our leave of creatures; let us turn with love to Him, and He will straightway turn with love to us. To all He says: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). O ye who are afflicted, come unto Me; and it shall be my care to raise you up. In another passage He says: "Come and

accuse Me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow" (Is. i. 18). He goes so far as to say: 'Come, ye sinners,—come as penitents; and if I do not pardon you, "accuse Me,"—accuse Me, and treat Me as a liar. But no; howsoever blackened your consciences may be, I will, through My grace, cause them to become white as snow.' He goes after sinners as one weeping out of compassion over their ruin, saying: "And why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11.) As though He said: 'And why will you involve yourselves in damnation, My children, when you have in Me one who is ready to save you, if you will have recourse to Me?' Now, if He speaks in this way to those who are obstinate, how is it possible that He should drive away a soul that wishes to love Him? Tell me honestly, are you attached to any earthly affection, to any person, to any thing in the shape of property, to the ambition of excelling, of being preferred before others? Take heed to what is said by St. John of the Cross, that 'every attachment, however trifling,—every thread has power to prevent you from winging your way to God, and from being all His own.'

A. No; by the grace of God, I think that I have no attachment to any thing in this world, so as to be willing to commit for it any deliberate fault; but I see, nevertheless, that I am full of defects. I dislike to be despised; and on such occasions I sometimes show resentment.

Q. And, after this resentment, what is it that you do?

A. I humble myself, I pray to God to forgive me, and I resolve not to fall into the same error again, trusting in Jesus Christ to give me strength; but notwithstanding this, I remain altogether in a state of fear and disquiet. Then it seems as though it were impossible for me to possess the power of sanctifying myself; nay, the very pretending to it appears to me to be pride.

Q. All is well; persevere in acting thus. It is only not well to remain in a state of disquiet. If you fall, so to say, a hundred times in the day, always do the same,—make an act of contrition, and a resolution, through God's assistance, not to fall again, together with an act of confidence in Jesus Christ; and then remain in peace. You must know,

likewise, that it is not pride, even after a fault, for us to hope to sanctify ourselves; rather it would be pride to despond after the fault, and to be troubled, as though the resolutions we had made had secured us against any subsequent fall. Humble yourself, then, and have confidence in God. Enough now. I already understand and comprehend the substance of all your fears, which arise from not knowing whether you will obtain your salvation, and whether you are at present in the grace of God. What you have told me is enough; do not propose to me any more doubts and questions about these troubles of yours. I know your conscience already; and I wish to leave with you some reflections, which I hope will give you peace whenever you are troubled. Peace, I say, but not that peace which is free from every shade of fear; for this is the peace which God reserves for us in heaven. But while we are in this world, it is His will that we should ever have a certain degree of fear, that so we may not leave off waiting upon and praying for the Divine assistance, and confiding in the Divine mercy, otherwise we should often be forgetting to have recourse to God; and therefore it is that He permits us to be harassed by fears, in order that we may not give up our recourse to Him.

REASONS FOR HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE DIVINE MERCY
THROUGH THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST.

There are, then, according to what you have told me, two great fears by which, principally, you are distressed,—the first, that salvation may not be yours; the second, that God may not have pardoned your sins. With regard to the former of these,—whether your name is or is not inscribed in the Book of Life,—this is a secret which it is not the will of God that any should know; that so, through the fear of damnation, every one should be diligent, by means of good works, to secure his salvation. Thus St. Peter writes: "Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election" (2 Ep. i. 10). It is true that our conversion and salvation must be the work of God; but it is requisite for us, too, to strive on

our own part to convert ourselves to God, and then He will not fail to save us: "Be converted unto Me, and you shall be saved" (Is. xlv. 22).

It was Calvin's detestable blasphemy which asserted that God creates some people for the express purpose of sending them to hell; and the same infamous heretic went on to say, that God Himself constrained them to sin, in order that they might be damned; whereas it is certain that it is God's will for all to be saved: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). And He declares, even with respect to the wicked, who richly deserve everlasting death, that He would wish them too to be converted and saved: "As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). It is observed by Tertullian, that the words which stand first in this sentence ("as I live") are an oath which is taken by God, in order that we may believe Him without hesitation: "Swearing even,—saying, "As I live,"—desiring to be believed."⁵³ And hence that most learned writer, Petavius, expresses himself in terms of great astonishment that there should be any one to doubt that truth, that God's will is for all to be saved; and therefore he says, that if this Scripture, which God has confirmed by an oath, were ever permitted to be vilified and wrested into any other signification, what will there remain in matters of faith sufficiently clear to be safe against being called in question? "What is there so clearly set forth in decrees of faith as to be henceforth safe from cavils?"⁵⁴ And why is it that God has so great a desire to save all mankind? It is because He Himself has created them, by reason of the love which He has borne towards them from all eternity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"—this is what the Lord says to every man—"therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity upon thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Moreover, the Lord, knowing our weakness, has patience with sinners, as St. Peter tells us, because He wills not that they should perish, but do penance for their sins, and obtain salvation: "But deal patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 St. Pet. iii. 9). That Re-

deemer who has ransomed us from eternal death at the price of His own blood, says St. Augustine, does not desire to see those souls of ours lost which have cost Him so much : 'He who has redeemed us at so great a price does not wish those whom He has purchased to perish.'⁵⁵ In short, God would wish to save all ; and when He sees any who are constraining Him by their sins to sentence them to hell, He, as it were, weeps in compassion over them, and says : "And wherefore will ye die, O house of Israel ? Return ye, and live" (Ezech. xviii. 31, 32). As though He were to say : 'But, My children, why will you destroy and damn yourselves in eternity, when I have died upon the Cross in order to save you ? If you have gone astray from Me, return to Me as penitents, and I will restore to you the life that you have lost.'

Now from this you may infer whether it is not God's desire to see you saved ; and therefore, from this day forth, never again say, 'But who knows whether God wills that I be saved ? Who knows whether He does not will that I be damned for the offences which I have given Him ?' Drive all thoughts like these utterly away, seeing, as you do, that God is assisting you with His grace, and calling you by so many motives to His love.

Moreover, as regards your other fear,—that the Lord may not yet have pardoned the sins of your past life,—I have already told you at the outset, that, in respect of this, you ought to quiet yourself by the obedience which your confessor has given you, to think no further about confessing what has happened during your past life, after the confessions which you have already made. Recollect, as I told you, what St. Teresa says, that one who obeys his confessor, 'whether with suffering or without it,' may rest assured that he is doing God's will. And I would also put you in mind of what St. John of the Cross says, 'That not to rest satisfied with what one's confessor says is a want of faith ;' since, in truth, Jesus Christ has said that he who is obedient to His ministers is obedient to Himself, and he who despises His ministers despises Him : "He that heareth you heareth Me ; he that despiseth you despiseth Me" (St. Luke x. 16).

And so, from this day forth, let us place every thought

about our salvation in the hands of our Lord, and leave it there ; for He (as St. Peter says) has taken us into His care : "Casting all your care upon Him ; for He hath care of you" (1 St. Pet. v. 7).

Moreover, in order to keep ourselves in the grace of God, we must have an utter distrust of our own strength ; since, without the aid of grace, we could not do any thing that is good, and, on the contrary, might fall into all that is evil ; and therefore it is that our entire safety lies in recommending ourselves continually unto God, because being, as we are, in continual danger of falling, so we have continual need of procuring, through prayer, the assistance of God. This assistance, says St. Bernard, offers itself to all ; and no one remains without it except he who despises it : 'It is offered to all ; and no one is devoid of it save he who refuses it.'⁵⁶ The Divine aid, then, is offered to all ; but it is God's will that he who desires it should ask Him for it,—“Ask, and ye shall receive” (St. John xvi. 24) ; and he who is careless about asking for it will remain without it, and will involve himself in destruction. When the devil, then, is frightening us by the thought of our weakness, let us not give ourselves up to despair, but hope to receive the power to resist all his temptations from that God who is omnipotent, and who strengthens us to hope, saying, with the apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13) ; and if we place our confidence in God, how shall it be possible for us to be put to confusion ? No ; it is written in the Book of Ecclesiasticus : "No one hath hoped in the Lord, and been confounded" (ch. ii. 11). The mere Name of Jesus is sufficient to vanquish all the powers of hell. St. Paul says, that God has given to Jesus Christ a Name which is above every name, since it is at that Name that every thing is made to humble itself : "He hath given Him a Name which is above all names ; that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 9, 10). In contending with the enemies of our salvation, it often avails more to victory to call to our aid the Name of Jesus than to say many long prayers.

Further, while upon this point, I wish to leave with

you for your consolation some other instructions as to particulars, which, I think, may prove to be of great use to your conscience.

1. I repeat my recommendation to you to be obedient to your confessor, because, by what I have been able to ascertain with respect to this obedience, you have not had up to this time an entire faith, and therefore have often been disquieted. What I have said to you above on this matter is sufficient. Hold it for certain, that one who goes on under obedience is journeying safely to Paradise.

2. Then, when things go contrary, be careful to receive it all as from the hands of God; and especially in times of sickness be scrupulously obedient to your medical adviser, in taking the remedies he prescribes, making known to him without exaggeration all that you are suffering; and then remain in peace. Forbear to ask for acts of compassion from those who come to see you; and whenever any one expresses for you more than a moderate amount of compassion, let your reply be made in the words of Jesus Christ: "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (St. John xviii. 11.) Say: "God sends me this evil, not because He wishes me evil, but because He wishes well to me; and shall I not accept it with peace?" In time of sickness it is perceived whether a person is spiritual or no. There are some devout people who, when they are in health, are all sweetness and humility; but if they are in any way invalidated, they straightway become impatient and proud, complaining of all about them, and especially if they have not, to a moment, the medicine or the attendance which they require. In sickness, then, suffer all without making complaints; and in all circumstances, too, which savour of adversity, say with Job: "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). Be also careful to endure contempt without resentment; it is by this that one knows whether a person is humble, viz. if he receives contempt patiently.

3. God is all goodness to one who seeks Him: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh Him" (Eccles. ii. 11).

No one has ever put his trust in God, and had to remain abandoned by Him: "None hath hoped in the Lord, and been confounded" (ibid). God lets Himself be found even by those who seek Him not, as St. Paul observes: "I was found by them that did not seek Me" (Rom. x. 20; Is. lxxv. 1). With how much greater ease will He not allow Himself to be found by one who does seek Him! From this day forth, then, forbear to say that God has abandoned you; the Lord abandons none but the obstinate only, who desire to live in sin; neither does He altogether abandon even these, but is ever going after them up to the time of their death, giving them portions of light for their succour, that so He may not see them lost.

4. When a soul is seeking to love Him, He cannot but love it, as He has Himself declared: "I love them that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17). And whenever He hides Himself from these loving souls, He does so for their advantage only, that He may see them yet more desirous of finding His grace, and more closely united with Himself. Behold what St. Catherine of Genoa used to say, when suffering aridity to such a degree that it seemed to her as if God had abandoned her, and that nothing remained to her as a ground for hope; it was then that she would say: "How happy I am in this state, so deplorable even as it is! May my heart be broken down to ruins, provided that my Love be glorified! O my dearest Love, if from this unhappy state of mine is produced but a single atom of glory for Thee, I pray that Thou wouldst leave me thus for all eternity!" And saying this, she would burst into a flood of tears in the midst of her desolation.

5. You must know, that souls which love the Crucified enter, in time of desolation, into a closer union with God in the interior of their heart. There is nothing which occasions so diligent a search for God as does desolation; neither is there any thing which attracts God to the heart so much as desolation, since the acts of uniformity to the Divine will which are made in desolation are more pure and perfect than others; and hence, the greater the desolation, the greater is the humility, the purer is the resignation, the purer is the confidence, the purer are the prayers, and

so the more abundant are the Divine graces and assistances.

6. In order to arrive at perfection, attend above all things to the exercise of Divine love; the love of God, when He makes our heart His abode, is that which of itself despoils it of every irregular affection; nevertheless, let it be your endeavour to make frequent repetitions of acts of Divine love, saying: 'My God, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee; and I hope to die with these words on my lips, My God, I love Thee.' The saints tell us that a soul ought not to make fewer acts of love than of respiration.

7. Moreover, in time of prayer, make an unreserved offering of yourself to God many times over. Say to Him in all sincerity: 'My Jesus, I give myself up to Thee without reserve. I wish to be all Thine own, all Thine own; and if I know not how to give myself up as I ought, do Thou, my Jesus, take me, and make me all Thine own.' St. Teresa made an entire offering of herself to God fifty times every day. This is a practice which even you can follow. Therefore make a continual offering to Him of your will, in those words of St. Paul: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts xi. 6.) This one act was enough to transform St. Paul from a persecutor of the Church into a vessel of election. For this purpose, too, pray to God frequently in the words of David: "Teach me to do Thy will" (Ps. cxlii. 10). To this end should be directed all the prayers which you offer to God and to the Mother of God, to your guardian angel, and to all your patron saints, that they would obtain for you the grace perfectly to do the will of God; in short, let this one expression, *fiat voluntas Tua*, serve you as a remedy for all your evils, and as a means of attaining all that is good.

8. And when you experience more aridity than usual, exercise yourself by delighting in the infinite joy which your God, whom you love, is enjoying, which is an act of love the most perfect that is exercised by the saints in heaven, who rejoice not so much for their own beatitude as for that of God, loving Him all the while, as they do, immeasurably beyond themselves.

9. Then, with reference to the subject of prayer, al-

ways meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ. Jesus suffering out of His love for us is the object which most forcibly attracts our hearts. If, while meditating on the mysteries of the Passion, the Lord grants you any feeling of tenderness, receive it with thankfulness; but whenever you do not experience this, you must know that you will always derive from the practice great comfort for your soul. Frequently go, more especially, to the garden of Gethsemani, after the example of St. Teresa, who used to say that she found Him there alone; and on considering Him when in affliction so great that He falls into an agony, sweats blood, and declares His sorrow to be such as to be enough to cause Him to die, you will readily find comfort in any afflictions of your own, seeing that He endures it all out of His love for you. And at that sight of Jesus preparing Himself to die for you, do you likewise prepare yourself to die for Him; and when you experience in your distresses more affliction than usual, then say what St. Thomas, the Apostle said to the other disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (St. John xi. 16). Let us die with Jesus.

10. Go likewise to Calvary, where you will find Him expiring on the Cross, consumed by suffering; and on seeing Him in that condition, it were impossible for you not to rest content willingly to suffer pain of every kind for a God who is dying of sufferings undergone through His love for you. St. Paul protested that he neither knew nor wished to know any thing in this life save Jesus crucified: "For I judged not myself to know any thing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2). St. Bonaventure says, that one who would maintain a continued devotion towards Jesus Christ, ought, with the eye of his understanding, to be ever contemplating Him dying upon the Cross: 'Let him who would preserve devotion within his soul, ever keep the eyes of his heart fixed upon Christ dying upon the Cross.' And thus, in all your fears, look at Jesus crucified, and take courage, and brace yourself up to suffer through love for Him.

11. Above every thing, prayer is that which I recommend to you; when you cannot tell what else to say, it

would be enough for you to say, Lord, help me, and help me quickly: 'Lord, come to my assistance; make haste, O Lord, to help me.' You are already aware how often the Church repeats this prayer in the office which priests and religious have to recite. And St. Philip Neri made the recital of the same prayer sixty-three times, in the fashion of a rosary, a subject of his instruction. The Lord has promised to grant us whatsoever we ask Him for: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." St. Bernard went off into an ecstasy, while thinking upon those words of Jesus Christ to the two sons of Zebedee, who said to Him: "Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us;" and the reply of Jesus was: "What would you that I should do for you?" (St. Mark x. 36.)

12. And all the graces which you ask of God, ask for them always in the name of Jesus Christ. Whatsoever we receive from God, we receive it all through the merits of Jesus Christ; and our Redeemer has Himself promised us, that whatsoever we ask of the Father in His name, the Father will give it us all: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name, He will give it you" (St. John xvi. 23). Now when you are afraid lest it should be God's will to send you to hell, think with yourself whether it be possible for Him who says, "Ask of Me what you will, and I will give it you," to have the will to send you to hell.

13. And why, then, when you are in a state of desolation, are you disposed to entertain the suspicion that God hates you? You ought not to grieve, but rather to be consoled, by seeing that God is dealing with you as He deals with the souls of those of His servants who are the most dear to Himself. And how has He not dealt with His own Son, of whom it is written in Holy Scripture: "The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity" (Is. liii. 10). It was His will to behold Him consumed and crushed under sufferings and torments.

14. When you are frightened by the thought that it may be God's will to abandon you on account of your ingratitude, do that which was done by the two disciples, who, as they were going to Emmaus, were accompanied

by Jesus in the guise of a pilgrim; and when they were near the place, Jesus gave signs of its being His will to go further ("He made as though He would go further"); but they, the gospel tells us, constrained Him, saying: "Stay with us, because it is towards evening." And then He was pleased to enter into the house, and to remain with them: "And He went in with them." All this is told us by St. Luke (ch. xxiv. 29); and thus, when it seems to you as if it were the Lord's will to leave you, do you constrain Him to remain with you, saying to Him: 'My Jesus, stay with me, remain with me, I wish that you would not leave me; if you do leave me, to whom shall I have to go for consolation and salvation?' "Lord, to whom shall we go?" as was said by St. Peter (St. John vi. 69). And so go on to pray to Him lovingly and tenderly; and do not fear but that, to a certainty, He will not leave you. Then say with the apostle: "Neither death, nor life . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). Say to Him: 'My Saviour, show Thyself as much displeased with me as Thou wilt; but know, that neither the fear of death, nor a desire for life, nor any other of this world's creatures, shall ever have power to separate me from my love for Thee.' Or, again, say what was said by St. Francis of Sales, when a young man and in a state of aridity, in answer to the devil, who suggested to him that he was destined to go to hell: 'And since I shall not be able to love my God in eternity, I wish to love Him, at least in this life, as much as lies in my power.' And so he recovered his cheerfulness.

15. Again: when you feel yourself more than usually oppressed by fears or dryness, do not omit to have recourse to most holy Mary, whom God has given us as a consoler for those who are in affliction. Jesus Christ is the foundation of all our hopes; but the Church desires us to call Mary our hope: '*Spes nostra, salve.*' All graces, in their origin, come to us from God; but St. Bernard says, that they all pass through Mary's hands; and consequently he who does not recommend himself to the Blessed Virgin closes against himself the channel of grace; while, on her

part, she does not neglect to give succour to every one who calls upon her to aid him. And therefore it is that all the saints have been careful to recommend themselves continually to this divine Mother, who has all power with God.

16. Moreover, all the time that you have the intention of loving God, keep your heart open: "Open thy mouth, and I will fill it" (Ps. lxxx. 11). The meaning of what is here said by God, "Open thy mouth, and I will fill it," is, that the more we hope for from God, the more we shall receive from Him. He has declared that He shows favour towards those who place confidence in Him: "He is the protector of all that trust in Him" (Ps. xvii. 31). And represent to yourself, whenever you feel doubts about the Lord's hearing you, that He is chiding you as He did St. Peter, and saying to you: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (St. Matt. xiv. 31.) Why dost thou doubt My hearing thee, knowing as thou dost the promise which I have made, to grant the requests of every one that prays to Me? And because He is willing to grant us our requests, it is His will that we believe that He certainly does grant them whenever we ask Him for graces: "All things whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you" (St. Mark xi. 24). Observe the words, "believe that you shall receive;" for they show that we must ask God for graces with a sure, unhesitating confidence that we shall receive them; as St. James also exhorts us: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (St. James i. 6). In dealing with this God, who is all goodness, have a great confidence, and rid yourself of every thing like sadness. He who serves God and is sad, instead of honouring Him, rather treats Him with dishonour. St. Bernard tells us, that he wrongs God who represents Him to himself as cross and severe; being, as He is, goodness and mercy itself. 'How can you entertain a doubt,' says the saint, 'of Jesus pardoning your sins, when He has affixed them to the Cross, whereon He died for you, with the very nails by which His own hands were pierced?'

17. God declares that it is His delight to be with us:

"My delights are to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 31). If, then, it is God's delight to treat with us, it is only just that all our delights should consist in treating with Him; and this thought should give us courage to treat with God with every confidence, endeavouring to spend all that remains of life to us with this God of ours, who loves us so much, and with whom we hope to be in company in heaven for all eternity.

18. Let us, then, treat Him with all confidence and love, as our most dear and affectionate friend, who loves us more than any other does. Alas! souls that are scrupulous treat God as a tyrant, from whose subjects reserve and fear only are required; and consequently they are apprehensive that, at every word inconsiderately spoken, at every thought which crosses their mind, He may enter into His wrath with them, and be disposed to cast them into destruction in hell. No; God does not take His grace away from us excepting when we consciously and deliberately despise Him, and will to turn our backs upon Him; and when, by some venial fault, we slightly offend Him, He is certainly displeased by it, but does not therefore deprive us of the love which He bears towards us; whence, by an act of contrition or of love, He is at once appeased.

19. His infinite majesty may justly claim all reverence and self-abasement from us; but He is better pleased that the souls which love Him should treat Him with loving confidence rather than with timid servility. So do not treat God as a tyrant any more. Recal to your mind the graces which He has bestowed upon you, even after the offences and acts of ingratitude which you have committed against Him; recollect the loving treatment which He has dealt out towards you, in order to extricate you from the disorders of your past life, and the extraordinary lights which He has given you, by means of which He has so often called you to His holy love; and so treat Him from this day forth with great confidence and affection, as being your dearest object. Now to proceed.

20. It were unnecessary for me here to recommend to you the frequentation of the Sacraments, frequenting them as you do already. Go to confession not less frequently

than twice, or at least once, during the week; and with regard to communion, act in obedience to your director; but even when you feel to be in a state of aridity, do not neglect to ask for it, since it is a rule with directors to allow communion more or less frequently according to the desire which they perceive in the penitent. When your director sees that you do not ask him for it, nor show a desire for it, he will hardly of his own accord prescribe it; and when you do not make an actual communion, at least make a spiritual one, which you are able to do, and make it frequently in the course of the day.

21. Moreover, let the dearest objects of your affection be these two great mysteries,—the Sacrament of the Altar and the Passion of Jesus Christ. If the love of all hearts were to gather itself together into one heart only, this would certainly not be able to correspond, even in the smallest measure, to the love which Jesus Christ has shown us in these two mysteries of the Passion and the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Let it, then, be your endeavour, during the remainder of your life, to love and have confidence in Him; and do not become sad when you find yourself in afflictions and tribulations; for this is a sign, not of His hatred, but of the love which God bears towards you. And therefore, in reference to this point, and as a conclusion to this little treatise, I will here cite for you the example of the Virgin St. Lidwine; and I know not whether there is to be met with among the annals of the saints an instance of any other soul suffering so great affliction and desolation as did this holy virgin.

She was born of poor parents, in a town of Holland called Schiedam. One day, while she was yet a little girl, in walking on the ice, she fell and broke a rib; and as, in consequence of their poverty, it was not afterwards cured, there was formed upon the broken rib an abscess, which broke of itself, and infected her whole body, so that it became paralysed. Her parents left her to herself, without taking any care of her, while she continued full of pain, with all the limbs of her body, excepting only her head and left arm, contracted. Her right arm was, consequently, utterly useless; and at the same time she was seized with

St. Antony's fire to such a degree, that her very bones were gradually eaten away; and during all this she did not venture even to speak of the evils from which she was suffering, lest her parents might do something to increase them.

22. She suffered continual and excruciating pains in her head. On her forehead she had a large sore; and in her chin there was a wound extending to the mouth, full of congealed blood, which prevented her from speaking and eating. One of her eyes had retreated inwards and become useless; the other was so full of bad humours, that she could not bear the light of the sun, and scarcely even that of a lamp. She suffered so much from toothache, that the pain brought her down even to death's door. She had a continual flow of blood either from the mouth, nostrils, eyes, or ears. In her throat she had a tumour, which prevented her even from breathing freely; she had to bear the torment of a perpetual fever; she suffered continually from vomiting, throwing up a great quantity of bloody water after taking even the smallest amount of food. She was at one and the same time dropsical, feverish, and consumptive, destitute of every thing; and she received assistance from no one. There might sometimes be one who, out of compassion, would hand her some medicine; but that only made her sufferings twofold; and she would take it with all the obedience of a lamb, never making complaints about it. Her parents, being poor, and wearied out by her calamities, which were so great, used to grumble at her, saying that she was born only to be a torment to them, and to consume whatever little supplies their home might furnish; so that it would be better if death were to take her. She used to weep, not for her own afflictions, but for the inconvenience which she caused to others.

23. Being unable to move, she was obliged constantly to lie upon her back, which was all in such a state of putrefaction, that the skin stuck to the bed,—that is to say, to that poor straw on which she lay abandoned; so that whenever any one, out of compassion, raised her up, her skin would remain adhering to the straw; and her body became, as it were, excoriated. In short, the appearance of that poor maiden of fifteen years of age upon her bed was the

same as that of a corpse lying all but breathless upon a bier; and such was the state in which this holy virgin lived for thirty-eight years. It is also related, that four soldiers entered her room one day; and, after using much abusive language to her,—calling her a hypocrite and a witch, the truth about whom would in due time be discovered,—they took away from her the poor blanket which covered her half-dead body. Before taking their departure, too, they bent her, and even wounded her with their swords.

24. There was added to all these external evils an interior desolation,—an affliction from which she suffered for years; since God, for her greater purification, withdrew from her (as is His wont in the case of those souls which are most precious in His sight) His sensible assistance, so that she found herself bereft of her usual loving confidence in God; and then the devil tormented her fiercely, suggesting to her that such great evils as those by which she was oppressed were a sure sign that the Lord had abandoned her, and that she would die in a state of despair. Nevertheless, assailed although she was by so much sickness and by such interior tribulations, she suffered it all with resignation, blessing God for dealing with her so; and in order to appease Him, she girt herself with a cincture of horse-hair, which penetrated into her sores.

25. Such was the state of desolation in which the saint lived for four years; but all her sufferings she bore with resignation to the Divine will, ever blessing God for treating her in this manner. All that she had to undergo she united to the Passion of Jesus Christ; and this was the way in which, throughout the whole of that time, she sustained that fearful storm. But then God began to give her great consolation; and however great might be the sufferings which she might experience afterwards, she would nevertheless say: 'When I see my Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross, I feel my pains no longer. My sufferings urge me to cry out; but my heart urges me to say, Jesus, my love, increase my pains, but increase my love.' To others, when condoling with her, she would say: 'All the evil from which I am suffering is a mere nothing, being, as I am, in the hands of a goodness which is infinite, such as my God

is, whose bowels of compassion exceed those of either one's father or mother.'

26. Once more: if you love Jesus Christ, do not omit to make to Him a daily recommendation of sinners. St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi paid great attention to prayer for sinners. It is a sign of having but little love for God, when a soul which knows how many outrages He receives at the hands of infidels, heretics, and sinners of so many other descriptions, neglects to pray to the Lord for their conversion.

27. Take courage, I pray you, from all that you have now heard, and bear your aridity with fortitude; and when you feel more than usually oppressed, offer up the following prayer:

Prayer for a loving Soul when in desolation.

O my crucified Jesus! Thou dost already know that, out of love for Thee, I have left all; but after that Thou hast caused me to leave my all, I find that Thou Thyself hast left me too. But what am I saying, O my Love? Have pity upon me; it is not I who speak; it is my weakness that makes me speak thus. For myself, I deserve every kind of suffering, for such great sins as mine have been. Thou hast left me, as I have deserved, and hast withdrawn from me that loving assistance of Thine wherewith Thou hast so often consoled me; notwithstanding, however disconsolate and abandoned I may be by Thee, I protest that it is my will ever to love Thee and to bless Thee. Provided that Thou dost not deprive me of the grace of being able to love Thee, deal with me as Thou pleasest. I will say to Thee, in the words of that beloved servant of Thine:

'I love Thee, though I seem
An enemy in Thy sight;
Repel me as Thou wilt,
I will ever follow Thee.'

Lord, take not Thyself from me, and then take from me all besides, as may seem good in Thy sight. "Draw me after Thee." My Love, draw me after Thee, and then it matters not though Thou take from me the consolation of

being conscious of it; but let it be forcibly that Thou drawest me, dragging me out of the mire of my sins. Help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood. I wish to be all Thine own, cost me what it may; I wish to love Thee with all my strength; but what can I do myself? Thy Blood is my hope. O Mary, Mother of God! my refuge! neglect not to pray for me in all my tribulations! First of all in the Blood of Jesus Christ, and then in thy prayers, do I trust for my eternal salvation. 'In thee, O Lady, have I hoped,' I will say to thee with St. Bonaventure: 'I shall not be confounded for ever.' Obtain for me the grace ever to love my God in this life and in eternity, and I ask for nothing more.

DEVOUT AFFECTIONS

OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO BELONG ENTIRELY
TO JESUS CHRIST.

I. AFFECTIONS OF A LIVELY FAITH.

O YE atheists, who believe not in God, fools that you are; if you do not believe that there is a God, tell me who created you. How can you imagine that there are creatures existing, without a previous power having created them? This world which you admire, governed as it is in such beautiful and constant order,—could chance, which has neither order nor mind, ever have made it? Poor wretches! you try to persuade yourselves that the soul dies like the body; but, O God, what will you say, when in the next world you find that your souls are immortal, and that throughout all eternity you will be unable to repair the ruin you have incurred?

But if you believe that there is a God, you must also believe that there is a true religion; and if you do not believe that the religion of the Roman Catholic Church is the true one, tell me which is the true one? Perhaps that of the Pagans, who admit many gods, and so destroy and deny all of them. Perhaps that of the Mahometans, which is a mixture of fables, of follies, and of contradictions; a religion invented by an infamous impostor, and framed rather for beasts than for men. Perhaps that of the Jews, who, indeed, had at one time the true faith; but because they rejected their expected Redeemer, who taught the new law of grace, they have lost their faith, their country, and all. Perhaps that of those heretics who, separating themselves from our Church, which was first founded by Jesus Christ, and to whom He promised that she should never fail, have

confused all revealed dogmas in such a way, that the belief of each one is contrary to that of his neighbour. Ah! it is most evident that our faith is the only true one. Either there is faith, and then there can be no other true religion but ours; or there is no faith, and then all religions are false. But this cannot be; for if there is a God, there must be a true faith and a true religion.

But what much greater fools are those Christians who hold the true faith, and live as if they did not believe it! They believe that there is a God, a just Judge, that there is a paradise, and an eternal hell; and yet they live as if there were neither judgment, nor heaven, nor hell, nor eternity, nor God. O God, how can Christians believe in Jesus Christ, believe in a God born in a stable, a God living obscurely in a shop for thirty years, working for His livelihood every day as a simple servant; in fine, how can they believe in a God nailed on a cross, and dying, consumed with grief; and not only not love Him, but even make a mockery of Him by their sins! O holy faith, enlighten all those poor blind creatures who run to eternal perdition! But this light does ever shine forth and enlighten all men, both the faithful and unbelievers: "True light, which enlighteneth every man." How is it, then, that so many are lost? O cursed sin, thou dost blind the minds of so many poor souls, who open their eyes when they enter into eternity; but then they can no more remedy their error!

How is it, my Jesus, that so many of Thy servants have shut themselves up in caves and deserts, to attend only to their salvation; so many nobles and even princes have retired to the cloister, in order to live in poverty and unknown to the world, to make sure of their eternal salvation; so many martyrs have left all, so many tender virgins have renounced marriage with the highest nobles of the earth, and have embraced such torments as the rack, have braved the axe, the coat of mail, the red-hot gridirons, and the most cruel deaths, rather than lose Thy grace; while so many others live in sins and far from Thee for months and years?

I thank Thee, my Jesus, for the light Thou givest me, by which Thou makest me know that the goods of this

world are but smoke, filth, vanity, and deceit, and that Thou art the true and only Good.

My God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given me this faith, and that Thou hast made it so clear to us by the fulfilment of prophecies, by the truth of miracles, by the constancy of martyrs, by the sanctity of the doctrine, and by the wonderful propagation of the same throughout all the world; so that if it were not true, it would be impossible not to say that Thou hadst deceived us, in proving it to us by the numerous testimonies Thou hast given us of it.

I believe all that the Church teaches me to believe, because Thou hast revealed all to us. Nor do I pretend to comprehend intellectually those mysteries which are above my mind; it is enough that Thou hast said it. I pray Thee to increase Thy faith in me: *Adauge nobis fidem.*

II. AFFECTIONS OF CONFIDENCE.

My Jesus, the sight of my sins makes me afraid; but the sight of Thee crucified animates and consoles me still more. Thou wilt not deny me pardon, since Thou hast given me Thy blood and Thy life. Wounds of Jesus, ye are my hope!

My dear Redeemer, at my death, in those last and more vehement assaults which hell will make against me, Thou must be my consolation. I hope that, by the bitter death Thou didst undergo for me, Thou wilt make me die in Thy grace and burning with love to Thee. And by those three hours of agony which Thou didst suffer on the cross, give me the grace to suffer with resignation and for Thy love all the pains of my agony. And thou, Mary, by that grief which thou didst feel when Jesus thy Son expired, obtain for me the grace, that my soul may expire while making an act of the love of God; and may come and love Him, together with thee, for all eternity in Paradise.

My Jesus, by Thy merits I hope for the pardon of all the outrages I have committed against Thee. How can I, my crucified Love, fear to obtain forgiveness, if Thou hast died in order to pardon me? How can I doubt Thy mercy, whilst it is that which made Thee come down from heaven

to seek after my soul? How can I fear that Thou wilt deny me grace to love Thee, if Thou hast suffered so much to gain my heart? How can I fear that the sins I have committed, and of which I repent with all my heart, may deprive me of Thy grace, if Thou hast shed all Thy blood to wash me from my sins, and to enable me to regain Thy friendship? I see that Thou dost give me an abhorrence of the insults I have offered Thee, Thou givest me light to know the vanity of the things of the world, Thou makest me know the love Thou hast borne me, Thou givest me the desire of being all Thine;—all these are signs that Thou dost desire to save me; and I desire to be saved, to come to heaven, where I shall praise Thy mercies for ever: *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo*. May the grief I feel for having offended Thee remain always present to my mind, and may the desire of loving Thee with all my heart be fixed there too!

My beloved Redeemer, my Judge, when, at the point of death, I shall enter into Thy presence, ah, drive me not away from Thy face: "When Thou comest to judge, condemn me not." Send me not to hell, because in hell I cannot love Thee. Ah, let not those wounds, which Thou bearest imprinted in Thee as signs of the love Thou hast borne me, be an eternal torment to me! Pardon me, then, before the hour of judgment shall come. Grant that, the first time I see Thee, Thy look may be one of mercy, and not of anger; declare me then to be Thy chosen sheep, and not a lost goat.

'Thou sufferdest upon the tree:
Let not vain Thy labour be.'

Let not Thy blood have been wasted in my regard.

I am a sinner, it is true; but Thou sayest Thou desirest not the death of the sinner: "I desire not the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). I give up all, I renounce all the goods of this world,—pleasures, riches, dignities, honours: I see that they are all filth, lies, and poison; and I turn to Thee, my God. My crucified Jesus, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more!

O God! Thou hast given Thy life, my dear Redeemer, to gain heaven for me; and I, by my accursed pleasures, have lost heaven, and Thee the Infinite Good. I am not worthy to come into that kingdom of saints; but Thy blood and Thy death encourage me to hope it. Yes, I hope and wish for heaven; I desire it, my Jesus, not in order to enjoy more, but to be able to love Thee better, and to be certain of loving Thee always.

When, my Love and my All, shall I see myself embracing Thy feet, and kissing those wounds which have been the pledge of Thy love, and the cause of my salvation? I read, my Jesus, in my conscience, the sentence of death which I deserve for the offences I have committed against Thee; but I read also upon Thy cross the sentence of pardon which Thou hast obtained for me by Thy death: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall never be confounded."

My dear Saviour, I hope Thou hast pardoned me all the past. When I call to mind the many times I have betrayed Thee, I tremble for the future; but this very fear increases my confidence, because, knowing my weakness, I see that I can no longer trust in myself nor in the resolutions I have taken, and therefore I hope in Thee alone to give me strength to be faithful.

I am terrified at the thought of not knowing whether I shall be saved or lost; but seeing Thee, Jesus, my Beloved, expiring on the Cross for my salvation, I am animated by a sweet hope, which consoles me, and tells me that I shall love Thee without ceasing both in this life and in the next: it tells me that one day I shall find myself in the kingdom of love, where I shall be entirely and for ever consumed with Thy love, without the fear of losing Thee again. At this moment I do not even know whether I am worthy of Thy love or Thy hatred; but I feel a great hatred of sin, I am disposed to suffer any death rather than lose Thy grace, I have a great desire to love Thee and to be all Thine; these are all Thy gifts, and they are signs that Thou lovest me. If, then, I have reason to fear on account of my sins, I have still greater reason to confide in Thy goodness through the mercies Thou dispensest to me.

I abandon myself therefore into Thy hands,—those hands which were pierced and nailed to the Cross, to rescue me from hell: *In manus Tuas commendo spiritum meum; redimisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.*

The Apostle says: “He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?” (Rom. viii. 32.) If, then, O my Jesus, Thy Father has given Thee to us, and has sent Thee to die for us, how can we fear that He will refuse us pardon, His grace, perseverance, His love, and Paradise? ‘With Him all things, all things without exception, has He given us.’ Yes, my Redeemer, I hope all from the Blood Thou hast shed for me: “Help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious Blood.”

O Queen of Heaven! O Mother of God, our hope, and the refuge of sinners, have pity on us! ‘*Spes nostra, salve; Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis.*’

III. SENTIMENTS OF PENITENCE.

My Jesus, by that hatred which Thou hadst for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani, give me a true sorrow for all the offences I have committed against Thee. O my accursed sins, I hate and detest you; ye have made me lose the grace of my Lord! I repent, my Jesus, for having turned my back upon Thee. Would that I had suffered any evil, rather than ever have offended Thee!

Ah, my sweet Redeemer, when I remember all the displeasure I have given Thee, I do not weep so much on account of the hell I have deserved, as on account of the love Thou hast borne me! Yes; because the fire of hell which I have deserved is not so great as the immense love Thou hast shown me in Thy Passion. And how is it, O God, that, knowing that Thou, my Lord, allowedst Thyself to be bound for me, scourged for me, spit upon for me, hanged upon a cross to die for me,—how is it that I could have so often despised Thy grace, and turned my back upon Thee? I should wish to die of grief; I repent, and am sorry for it above all things.

I know the evil I have done in separating myself from

Thee, my Sovereign Good. I ought to have suffered any pain, any evil, any death, rather than to offend Thee; and what greater evil could I commit than that of voluntarily losing Thy grace? Ah, my Jesus, my greatest affliction is, that I have despised Thy infinite goodness!

I thank Thee, my Lord, for the sweet promise of pardon that Thou hast made to sinners, of forgetting the sins of those who repent of having offended Thee: “I will not remember any of their iniquities.” It is all the fruit of Thy Passion. O sweet Passion! O sweet mercy! O sweet love of Jesus Christ! Thou art my hope. What would have become of me, my Jesus, if Thou hadst not died, and paid the debt of my sins?

O God, I thought of offending Thee, whilst Thou thoughtest of using mercy towards me! After my sin, I thought not of repenting; but Thou didst think to call me. Finally, I have done all in my power to procure my own damnation; and Thou, so to say, hast done all Thou couldst not to see me damned. Thou art, then, an Infinite Good, and I have despised Thee; Thou art my Lord, and I have lost the respect due to Thee; Thou art Infinite Goodness, and I have turned my back upon Thee; Thou art worthy of infinite love, and hast loved me so much, and I have denied Thee my love, and displeased Thee so often. But Thou hast said, that Thou canst not despise a heart that humbles itself and repents. Behold, I embrace Thy cross as a penitent; I repent with all my heart for having despised Thee. Receive me to Thy favour, for the sake of that Blood which Thou hast shed for me.

O Mary, hope of sinners, do thou obtain pardon for me, perseverance, and the love of Jesus Christ!

IV. RESOLUTIONS.

My Jesus, I love Thee, and firmly resolve to lose all rather than forfeit Thy grace. I am weak, but Thou art strong. Thy strength will make me strong against my enemies. This I hope through Thy Passion: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?”

I am not afraid, my crucified Lord, of losing my pos-

sessions, my relations, or even my life; I fear only to lose Thy friendship and Thy love. I am afraid I may displease Thee, and may so see myself deprived of Thy grace. I pray Thee to keep alive in me this holy love; help me to conquer all, that I may please Thee in every thing.

'Most sweet Jesus, never permit me to be separated from Thee.' I am the work of Thy hands; I have been redeemed by Thy Blood; do not abandon me to the misfortune of losing Thy love, and of separating myself from Thee. Assist me always in the dangers which shall befall me, and make me ever have recourse to Thee in them. I have a great desire to be faithful to Thee, and to live alone for Thee during the remainder of my life; do Thou give me the necessary strength. This do I hope from Thee.

My Jesus, increase in me the fear of displeasing Thee. I am horrified at my former treachery to Thee. But Thy merits console me; and the many graces Thou hast given me, these make me hope that Thou wilt not abandon me now that I love Thee, since Thou hast shown me so much mercy while I thought not of loving Thee. I do not trust in my own strength,—I know well how little it is worth,—I confide altogether in Thy goodness; and I firmly hope never more to see myself separated from Thee.

Oh, that I could be assured that I should never lose Thee again, and that I should always love Thee! But I resign myself to Thy Divine will, which so disposes and ordains it, for my good, that I should live always in this uncertainty till death, to make me strive after a closer union with Thee, and to pray always, 'Permit me never more to be separated from Thee.' Yes, my Jesus, I repeat it (and give me grace always to repeat it): 'Let me never be separated from Thee! let me never be separated from Thee!'

My Redeemer, I will no more depart from Thee. If all men should leave Thee, I will not leave Thee, even if it should cost me my life. I protest that, even if there was neither a heaven nor a hell, I would not leave off loving Thee; because Thou, my Love, art worthy of infinite love, though there should be no reward for those who love Thee, nor any punishment for those who love Thee not.

Oh, if the years of my past life were to return, I would spend them all in loving Thee! But they will never return. I thank Thee for having waited for me, and for not having sent me to hell as I deserved. And since Thou hast waited for me, I consecrate the rest of my life to Thee: I wish that all my thoughts, my desires, and my affections should serve only to please Thee, and to fulfil Thy holy will.

My beloved Jesus, I will not wait till Thou shalt be given to me at the point of death to embrace Thee. I embrace Thee now, and press myself closely to Thy nailed feet. My crucified Love, to obtain for me a good death, Thou hast condescended to die a most agonising and sorrowful death. At that hour, when every one will abandon me, do not Thou abandon me, my Redeemer; permit me not to lose Thee, or to separate myself from Thee. Receive me into Thy sacred wounds; and may my soul there breathe itself out in loving sighs, that it may come where Thou art to love Thee for ever.

V. LOVING AFFECTIONS.

O most loving Pastor of Thy sheep! for Thou hast spent, not all Thy riches, but all Thy Blood for them. O the goodness! O the love! O the tenderness of a God for souls! Oh, that I also, my Jesus, could give my blood and my life on a cross, or under the axe, for the love of Thee, who hast given Thy life on the Cross for me! May all angels and men eternally praise Thy infinite charity towards men! Oh, that by my death I could make all men love Thee! Graciously receive, my Lord, this my desire; and give me grace to suffer something for Thee before I die.

Ah, the martyrs have done but little, O Saviour of the world, in suffering torments, the rack, iron hooks, burning helmets, and in embracing the most cruel deaths for the love of Thee, their God, who didst die for the love of them. Thou hast died for me also; and what have I done as yet, during all my life, for Thy love? My Jesus, let me not die in this state. I love Thee; and I offer myself to suffer for Thee as much as Thou wilt. Accept this my offer, and give me strength to put it in execution.

My crucified Jesus! from Thy cross Thou didst foresee the offences I should commit against Thee; and, at the same time, Thou wert procuring my pardon. Thou didst foresee my destruction, and didst prepare the remedy. Thou didst foresee my ingratitude, and Thou didst prepare for me remorse, fear, lights of salvation, calls to repentance, spiritual consolations, the tenderness and all the endearments of Thy charity. Thou didst vie with me to see which should conquer,—I in offending Thee, or Thou in redoubling Thy graces to me; I in provoking Thee to punish me, or Thou in drawing me to Thy love. When, my God, shall I have overcome all things to please Thee, who hast given Thy life for me? When shall I see myself detached from all, to be united to Thee and to Thy holy will? I desire it, and wish to perform it; but Thou must enable me to do so. I have not the strength to put it into effect. Thou hast promised to hear those that pray to Thee; I beseech Thee, with all my heart, not to let me live and die ungrateful for so much goodness.

O Word Incarnate! O Man of Sorrows, born to live a life full of woes! O first and last of men!—first, because Thou art God, Lord of all; last, because in this world Thou wast contented to be ill-treated like the vilest of men,—even to suffer blows, spitting, mockeries, and curses from the very scum of the people. O Divine Lamb! O Infinite Love, and worthy of infinite love! who hast given Thy Blood and Thy life for me, I love Thee, and I offer Thee my blood and my life; but what is the blood of a worm in comparison to the Blood of a God?—the life of a sinner to the life of an Infinite Majesty?

My beloved Jesus, who, urged on by the bowels of Thy mercy, didst come on earth to seek us lost sheep, ah, do not cease to seek me in my misery till Thou hast found me! Remember that for me also Thou didst shed Thy Blood.

O my Jesus, who for my love didst deign to be sacrificed on the Cross, there to die consumed with grief, I love Thee; and I desire to sacrifice myself entirely to Thy love. Stretch forth one of Thy pierced hands, and raise me from the mire of my sins; heal the many wounds of my soul; burn, destroy in me all those affections which belong not to

Thee. Thou canst do it; grant it, then, for the sake of Thy Passion. This do I hope.

Because Thou hast loved me, Thou hast not denied me Thy Blood and Thy life; I, because I love Thee, will deny Thee nothing Thou dost require of me. Without reserve Thou hast given Thyself all to me in Thy Passion and in the Sacrament of the Altar; I, without reserve, give myself all to Thee. Tell me what Thou desirest of me, and by Thy help I will do it all.

O ye damned souls! speak, and say, from the prison in which you are, what torments you most in hell,—the fire that burns you, or the love which Jesus Christ has borne you? Ah, assuredly the hell of your hell is this: to see that a God came down from heaven to earth to save you, and you, shutting your eyes to the light, have chosen of your own free will to be lost, and to lose this infinite good, even your God, who will be yours no longer, nor will you ever be able to regain Him.

Ah, my Jesus! my Treasure, my Life, my Consolation, my Love, my All! I thank Thee for the light Thou givest me. I love Thee; and I fear nothing but to lose Thee, and to see myself deprived of the power to love Thee. Grant that I may love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

My crucified Jesus! ah, break the chains of my inordinate affections, which prevent my being wholly united to Thee, and bind me by the golden links of Thy love; but bind me so tightly, that I shall never be able to loose myself from Thee. The artifices of love Thou hast used towards me were sufficient to bind me; but I do not see myself united to Thee as I would wish. Do Thou accomplish this; Thou alone canst do it. O love of my Jesus, thou art my love and my hope! My Jesus, I desire Thy pure love, free from all interest of my own; and I care not if I am deprived of all personal satisfaction. Make me love Thee, and that alone is sufficient for me. I know, my Lord, that Thou desirest my love. This is why Thou hast not sent me to hell, and why for so many years Thou hast drawn near to me, and hast made these words sound in my ears: 'Love Me, love Me with all thy heart.' Tell me what I

must do in order to please Thee fully. Behold me now; I give Thee my will, my liberty, my whole self: I know not what more to give Thee. In this world I desire neither pleasures nor honours; the only happiness and honour I desire is to be all Thine. Do Thou accept me. Help me with Thy grace, and never abandon me: "Be Thou my helper; forsake me not. Do not Thou despise me, O God, my Saviour" (Ps. xxvi. 9). My Love and my Saviour, despise me not as I have deserved. Remember how much my soul has cost Thee, and save me. My salvation is to love Thee, and to love none but Thee.

My Jesus, I wish for none but Thee. Thou hast said that Thou lovest those that love Thee: '*Ego diligentes me diligo.*' I love Thee; do Thou also love me. There was a time when I saw myself hated by Thee for my sins; but now I detest them more than any other evil, and I love Thee above all things. Do Thou also love me, and hate me no more. I fear Thy hatred more than all the pains of hell.

My beloved Redeemer, I will say to myself, with St. Teresa: 'Since I must live, may I live only for Thee. Let our own interests be put an end to. What can be a greater gain than to please Thee?'

VI. AFFECTIONS OF CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

My Jesus, every time that I say 'Blessed be God,' or 'May the Divine will be done,' I intend to accept all that Thou hast ordained for me both in time and in eternity. I desire no other office, no other habitation, no other clothing, no other food, no other health, but what it shall please Thee to send me.

I wish for no other employment, no other talent, no other fortune than that which Thou hast destined for me. If Thou dost will that I should not succeed in my affairs; that my undertakings should fail; that my lawsuits should be lost; that my possessions should be taken away from me,—this also is my will.

If Thou wishest me to be despised, looked upon with ill-will, that others should be preferred to me, that I

should be defamed and ill-treated even by my dearest friends,—this is my will also.

If Thou dost will that I should be made poor in all things, that I should be an exile from my country, imprisoned in a dungeon, and should be forced to live in continual sorrow and affliction,—this also is my will.

If Thou wilt that I should be always ill, full of wounds, lame, obliged to remain in my bed abandoned by all,—this I desire also, to be as Thou pleasest, and as long as Thou pleasest. I put my very life into Thy hands, and accept whatever death Thou hast destined for me; and I also accept the death of my relations and friends, and all that Thou shalt ordain.

I also unite my will to Thine in all that regards my spiritual welfare. I desire to love Thee in this life with all my strength, and to attain Paradise, that I may love Thee as the seraphim love Thee; but I am content with that which Thou dost will for me. If Thou dost will to give me but one single degree of love, of grace, of glory, I wish for no more, because it is Thy will. I value more the fulfilment of Thy will than any thing I could gain for myself. In fine, my God, dispose of me and of my affairs as it pleases Thee. Look not at my pleasure; for I desire nothing but what is in conformity to Thy will. Whether Thy treatment of me be harsh or kind, pleasant or unpleasant to me, I accept and embrace it, because both the one and the other comes to me from Thy hand.

My Jesus, I accept besides, in an especial manner, my death, with all the pains which shall accompany it, according to Thy will, where Thou wilt, and at the time Thou wilt. I unite them, my Saviour, with Thy death; and I offer them to Thee in testimony of the love I bear Thee. I desire to die to please Thee, and to fulfil Thy holy will.

VII. DIVERSE AFFECTIONS.

Oh, the unhappy state of a soul in sin which has lost God! It lives on in wretchedness, but lives without God. God sees it, but no longer loves it; He hates and abhors it. There was then, my soul, a time when thou didst live

without God. The sight of thee no longer rejoiced the Heart of Jesus Christ, as it did when thou wast in His grace, but was hateful to Him. The Blessed Virgin regarded thee with compassion, but detested thy deformity. When hearing Mass, thou didst see Jesus Christ in the consecrated Host, who had become thine enemy. Ah, my God, despised and lost by me, pardon me, and let me again find Thee! I wished to lose Thee, but Thou wouldst not abandon me. And if Thou hast not yet returned to me, I pray Thee to come to me now that I repent with all my heart for having offended Thee. Let me be sensible of Thy return to me, by feeling a great sorrow for my sins, and a great love towards Thee.

My beloved Lord, rather than see myself separated from Thee and deprived of Thy grace, I am content to suffer any punishment. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, I pray Thee to give me grace never more to offend Thee till my death; may I die rather than turn my back upon Thee afresh.

Ah, my crucified Jesus, look on me with the same love with which Thou didst look on me when dying on the Cross for me; look on me, and have pity on me; give me a general pardon for all the displeasure I have given Thee; give me holy perseverance; give me Thy holy love; give me a perfect conformity to Thy will; give me Paradise, that I may love Thee there for ever. I deserve nothing; but Thy wounds encourage me to hope for every good from Thee. Ah, Jesus of my soul, by that love which made Thee die for me, give me Thy love. Take away from me all affection to creatures, give me resignation in tribulation, and make Thyself the object of all my affections, that from this day forward I may love none other but Thee.

Thou hast created me, Thou hast redeemed me, Thou hast made me a Christian, Thou hast preserved me whilst I was in sin, Thou hast pardoned me many times; above all, instead of chastisements Thou hast increased Thy favours to me: who should love Thee, if I do not? Arise, and let Thy mercy triumph over me; and may the fire of love with which I burn for Thee be as great as the fire

which should have devoured me in hell, O my Jesus, my Love, my Treasure, my Paradise, my All!

O Incarnation, O Redemption, O Passion of Jesus Christ! O Calvary, O scourges, O thorns, O nails, O cross that did torment my Lord! O sweet names, which remind me of the love which a God has had for me, never depart from my mind and my heart; remind me always of the pains which Jesus my Redeemer has willed to suffer for me! O most sacred wounds, ye are the perpetual resting-place of my soul; ye are the blessed furnaces where it for ever burns with Divine love!

My beloved Jesus, I have deserved hell, and to be for ever separated from Thee; I refuse not the fire nor the other pains of hell, if Thou for my just punishment dost will to send me there; but what I cannot consent to is, not to be able to love Thee any more: let me love Thee, and then send me where Thou wilt. It is just that I should suffer for my sins; but it is not just that I should have to hate and curse Him who has created me, who has redeemed me, and who has loved me so much: justice requires that I should love and bless Thee for ever. I bless Thee, then, and love Thee, Jesus my Love; and I hope to love and bless Thee for all eternity.

My sweet Redeemer, I know Thou dost wish me to be wholly Thine. Ah, permit not that, from this day forward, creatures should have any part in that love which belongs altogether to Thee. Thou alone dost deserve all my affections, Thou alone art infinitely beautiful, Thou alone hast truly loved me; Thee alone, then, will I love, and I will do all I can to please Thee. I renounce all,—pleasures, riches, honours, and all the creatures of the earth; Thou alone, my Jesus, art sufficient for me. Away from me all earthly affections. Once upon a time you had a place in my heart; but then I was blind: now that God by His grace has enlightened me, and has made me know the vanity of this world and the love which He has borne me, and that He desires me to give Him all my love, I will consecrate it to Him alone. Yes, my Jesus, take possession of my whole heart; and if I know not how to give it to Thee entirely as Thou desirest, take it Thyself, and make it Thine own. I

love Thee, my God, with all my heart ; I love Thee more than myself. *Trahe me post te* ; draw me, my Lord, all to Thee, and destroy in me the love of all created things.

O Paradise, O country of loving souls, O kingdom of love, O sure haven where God is loved for all eternity, and where there is no more fear of losing Him ! when shall I pass thy threshold, and see myself free from this miserable body, and delivered from the many enemies which continually try to deceive me in order to deprive me of Divine grace ? Ah, my crucified Jesus, discover to me the immense riches Thou hast prepared for the souls that love Thee. Give me a great desire of possessing Paradise, so that, forgetting this world, I may there make my continual abode ; and whilst I live, may I have no other desire than to come to see Thee and love Thee face to face in Thy kingdom. I do not deserve it, and I know that at one time my name was written amongst those who were condemned to hell ; but now that I am, as I hope, in Thy grace, I beseech Thee, by that Blood which Thou didst shed for me on the Cross, to write me in the Book of Life. Thou hast died to gain Paradise for me ; I wish for it, I ardently desire it, and I hope to attain it through Thy merits, that I may there ascend, to be consumed with Thy love by loving Thee with all my strength. There, forgetting myself and every thing else, I shall think only of loving Thee, I shall desire nothing but to love Thee, and I shall do nothing but love Thee. O my Jesus, when shall this be ? O Mary, Mother of God, by thy prayers bring me to Paradise. 'Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy towards us ; and after this our exile, show unto us the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'

SIGHS OF LOVE TOWARDS GOD.

1. LORD, who am I, that Thou hast loved me so much, and that Thou shouldst so much desire to be loved by me ?
2. O my God, worthy of infinite love, I love Thee, or rather I should say, I love Thee not.
3. I love Thee above all things ; more than my life, more than myself ; but still I see that I love Thee too little.
4. O King of Heaven, make Thyself also King of my heart, possess me entirely.
5. I leave all, and turn to Thee. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my soul ; despise me not, Immeasurable Good ; I love Thee.
6. Now that Thou hast united me to Thee, O my Jesus, how can I see myself separated from Thee ? I love Thee, and will never cease to love Thee.
7. Unite Thyself to me, Lord ; let not the corruption of my sins drive Thee away from me.
8. O God, O God, whom shall I love if I love not Thee, my Life, my Love, my All ?
9. "Chosen amongst thousands." My God, Thou only, Thou alone do I choose for my love.
10. My Redeemer, I desire no other but Thee.
11. Oh, that I might be wholly consumed for Thee, who wast entirely consumed for me !
12. Take possession, Lord, of my whole will, and do with me what Thou pleasest.
13. O God not known ! O God not loved ! he is a fool that loves Thee not.
14. O my God, when I sinned I well knew that I was greatly displeasing Thee : have I done so ? could I do so ?
15. If I had died then, I should no longer have been able to love Thee. Now that I can, I will love Thee.
16. Lord, after having given me so many graces, permit me not to betray Thee again. Let me sooner die.

17. Thou hast borne with me, that I might love Thee. Yes, I will love Thee.

18. My God, Thou hast conquered me; I will withstand Thee no longer, I surrender myself to Thee.

19. O God, how many years have I not lost when I might have been loving Thee!

20. I consecrate to Thee, my God, the remainder of my life; and who can tell how long it may be?

21. What are riches? what are honours? what are pleasures? God, God, I desire God alone.

22. O King of hearts, reign in my heart. Ah, draw me all to Thee!

23. Bind me, O God, to Thee, in such a way that I shall never be able to loose myself from Thee.

24. Thou wilt not leave me, I will not leave Thee. Then we shall always love each other, O my God, O my God.

25. Ah, make me all Thine before I die, my Jesus, my Love, my Life, my Treasure, my All.

26. Ah, my Jesus, the first time I see Thee may it be with a propitious countenance!

27. When shall I be able to say: 'My God, my God, I cannot lose Thee any more?'

28. When, Lord, shall I see Thee as Thou art, and love Thee face to face for all eternity with my whole strength?

29. Ah, my Infinite Good, as long as I live, then, do I stand in danger of losing Thee.

30. My Jesus, what hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee? Yes, I will love Thee. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

31. O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus give me Thy love.

32. Permit one of the most ungrateful creatures that have ever lived on the earth to love Thee.

33. My God, I will love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

34. O my Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I will give myself all to Thee.

35. What greater pleasure can I have, than to please Thee, my God?

36. My beloved Jesus, I desire to love Thee as much as I have offended Thee.

37. I love Thee, Infinite Goodness; make me know the great good that I love.

38. My Jesus, Thou art the vine, I am one of Thy branches; keep me always united to Thee, never let me detach myself from Thee.

39. O my God, how much do I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy!

40. Ah, Lord, where art Thou? Art Thou with me or not? Am I in Thy grace or not? Thou knowest that I love Thee, I love Thee; I love Thee more than myself.

41. Give me, my Jesus, that love which Thou requirest of me.

42. Oh, that I had always loved Thee!

43. Oh, if I did but love Thee, my God, if I did but love Thee! I love Thee; but I love Thee too little.

44. Help me, Lord, to love Thee much, and to overcome all things to please Thee.

45. I give Thee my will. I desire nothing but that which Thou desirest.

46. I seek not consolations from Thee; I desire only to please Thee, my God, my Love, my All.

47. O Infinite God, I am not worthy to love Thee; suffer me to love Thee.

48. I hope to love Thee for ever, O Eternal God!

49. O my dear Jesus, Thou hast suffered so much for me; I desire to suffer for Thee as much as it shall please Thee.

50. O God of my soul, I can trust myself no longer to live without loving Thee.

51. O will of God, thou art all my love.

52. O Omnipotent God, make me a saint.

53. It will be for Thy glory, Lord, to make one who was Thine enemy become Thy loving servant.

54. Thou didst seek me, my God, while I was yet flying from Thee; Thou wilt not discard me now that I seek Thee.

55. My most loving Jesus, in order to pardon me Thou hast not pardoned Thyself.

56. I thank Thee for giving me time to love Thee. Yes, my God, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I will always love Thee.

57. O God worthy of infinite love, may I this day be entirely converted to Thee, my Love, my All!

58. Chastise me as Thou wilt; but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

59. Divine Father, Thou hast given me Thy Son; I, a miserable creature, give myself to Thee. Accept me, for pity's sake.

60. I desire, Lord, to make up for the offences I have committed against Thee by doing all I can to please Thee.

61. I desire to love Thee, my God, without interest, without ceasing, and without reserve.

62. My Jesus, despised for me, may I be despised for Thee!

63. My tormented Jesus, grant that I may suffer for the love of Thee all the pains of this life.

64. I should wish, my Redeemer, to die for Thee, who didst die for me.

65. I resolve this day to give myself all to Thee.

66. Oh, that all would love Thee as Thou deservest!

67. Grant, Lord, that I may leave undone nothing which I know to be pleasing to Thee.

68. Happy shall I be if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my All.

69. O Jesus, sacrificed for me, I sacrifice to Thee my whole will!

70. O my God, when shall I be all Thine?

71. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?

72. I will sing for ever the mercies of the Lord.

73. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?

74. O good Jesus, never permit me to be separated from Thee, never permit me to be separated from Thee!

75. What have I in heaven? and, besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.

76. 'May I die for the love of Thy love, who didst deign to die for the love of my love!' (St. Francis Assisi.)

77. 'My love is crucified' (St. Pasch.).

78. 'Give me but Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough' (St. Ignatius Loyola).

79. 'Let me die, Lord, that I may see Thee' (St. Augustine).

80. Ah, my Jesus, they who love Thee not do not know Thee!

81. I love Thy pleasure, Lord, more than all the pleasures of the world.

82. My crucified Jesus, how is it that all are not captivated by Thee?

83. Thou hast died for me; oh, that I could die for Thee, my Jesus, my Love, my Treasure, my All!

84. Lord, what shall I render to Thee for all Thou hast suffered for me?

85. Infinite Goodness, I esteem Thee above all things; I love Thee with all my heart; I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept my poor love, and give me more love.

86. May I forget all, that I may remember only Thee, my Love, my All.

87. I would wish to love Thee worthily. Accept, O God, this my desire, and give me Thy love!

88. I have offended Thee enough; now I desire to love Thee.

89. O God! O God! I am Thine, and Thou art mine.

90. May all be lost; but let not God be lost.

91. Let it cost what it will to gain God, He can never be dearly bought.

92. Thou alone, my Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

93. O Mary, look on me, and draw me all to God.

94. Most amiable Mother, I love thee exceedingly.

95. O Mother! give me confidence in thee, and make me always to have recourse to thee.

96. O Mary, it is for thee to save me. Thou canst make me holy: this is my hope. Have pity on me.

ASPIRATIONS OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST.

My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me.

My Love, do not permit me to separate myself from Thee.

When shall I be able to say, 'My God, I cannot lose Thee any more?'

Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldst desire so much to be loved by me?

And whom shall I love, if I love not Thee, my Jesus?

Here I am, Lord; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

Give me Thy love; I ask nothing more.

Make me all Thine before I die.

Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ have pity on me.

My God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more.

O my Jesus! would that I could be entirely spent for Thee, as Thou didst spend Thyself entirely for me.

If I had died while I was in sin, I could no more have loved Thee; now that I can love Thee, I will love Thee as much as I can.

To Thee do I consecrate all the remainder of my life.

I wish only, and I wish in all things, that which Thou dost desire.

When I see Thee for the first time, my Jesus, may it be with a look of mercy.

May I die rather than ever offend Thee again.

Thou wilt not leave me, I will not leave Thee; so shall our love endure in this world and in the next.

I should be too ungrateful, O my Jesus, if I loved Thee but little, after so many graces.

Thou didst give Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee.

Thou lovest those that love Thee. I love Thee; do Thou also love me.

If I love Thee but little, give Thou me the love Thou requirest of me.

What hast Thou not done to oblige me to love Thee? Make me conquer all things to please Thee.

Accept the love of a soul which has offended Thee so deeply.

Show me the immense good Thou art, that I may love Thee exceedingly.

I desire to love Thee exceedingly in this life, that I may love Thee exceedingly in the next.

I hope to love Thee for all eternity, O Eternal God!

Oh, that I had always loved Thee! Oh, that I had died rather than have offended Thee!

I give Thee my will, my liberty; dispose of me as Thou pleasest.

May my only happiness be to please Thee, O Infinite Goodness!

O my God! I rejoice in that Thou art infinitely happy.

Thou art omnipotent; make me a saint.

Thou hast sought me while I was fleeing from Thee; Thou didst love me when I despised Thy love: abandon me not now that I seek Thee and love Thee.

May I this day give myself wholly to Thee.

Send me any chastisement; but deprive me not of the power of loving Thee.

I thank Thee that Thou givest me time to love Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus, I love Thee; and I hope to die repeating, 'I love Thee, I love Thee.'

I desire to love Thee without reserve, and to do all that I know to be pleasing to Thee.

I love Thy good pleasure more than all the pleasures of the world.

I accept all the troubles that may happen to me, provided I love Thee, O my God. O my Jesus, that I could die for Thee, as Thou didst die for me!

Oh, that I could make all men love Thee as Thou deservest!

O will of God, thou art my love.

O God of love, give me love.

O Mary, draw me all to God.

O my Mother, make me always have recourse to thee. It is for thee to make me a saint. This is my hope.

MAXIMS

FOR

THE DIRECTION OF A SOUL THAT DESIRES TO ATTAIN
PERFECTION IN THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. To desire ardently to increase in the love of Jesus Christ.
2. Often to make acts of love towards Jesus Christ. Immediately on waking, and before going to sleep, to make an act of love; seeking always to unite your own will to the will of Jesus Christ.
3. Often to meditate on His Passion.
4. Always to ask Jesus Christ for His love.
5. To communicate often, and many times in the day to make spiritual communions.
6. Often to visit the Most Holy Sacrament.
7. Every morning to receive from the hands of Jesus Christ Himself your own cross.
8. To desire Paradise and death, in order to be able to love Jesus Christ perfectly and for all eternity.
9. Often to speak of the love of Jesus Christ.
10. To accept contradictions for the sake of Jesus Christ.
11. To rejoice in the happiness of God.
12. To do that which is most pleasing to Jesus Christ, and not to refuse Him any thing that is agreeable to Him.
13. To desire and to endeavour that all should love Jesus Christ.
14. To pray always for sinners and for the souls in purgatory.
15. To drive from your heart every affection that does not belong to Jesus Christ.
16. Always to have recourse to the most holy Mary, that she may obtain for us the love of Jesus Christ.

17. To honour Mary, in order to please Jesus Christ.
18. To seek to please Jesus Christ in all your actions.
19. To offer yourself to Jesus Christ to suffer any pain for His love.
20. To be always determined to die rather than commit a wilful venial sin.
21. To suffer crosses patiently, saying: 'Thus it pleases Jesus Christ.'
22. To renounce your own pleasures for the love of Jesus Christ.
23. To pray as much as possible.
24. To practise all the mortifications which obedience permits.
25. To do all your spiritual exercises as if it were for the last time.
26. To persevere in good works in the time of aridity.
27. Not to do nor yet to leave undone any thing through human respect.
28. Not to complain in sickness.
29. To love solitude, to be able to converse alone with Jesus Christ.
30. To drive away melancholy.
31. Often to recommend yourself to those persons who love Jesus Christ.
32. In temptation, to have recourse to Jesus crucified, and to Mary in her sorrows.
33. To trust entirely in the Passion of Jesus Christ.
34. After committing a fault, not to be discouraged, but to repent and resolve to amend.
35. To do good to those who do evil.
36. To speak well of all, and to excuse the intention when you cannot defend the action.
37. To help your neighbour as much as you can.
38. Neither to say nor to do any thing which might vex him. And if you have been wanting in charity, to ask his pardon and speak kindly to him.
39. Always to speak with mildness and in a low tone.
40. To offer to Jesus Christ all the contempts and persecution you meet with.
41. To look upon superiors as Jesus Christ.

42. To obey without answering and without repugnance, and not to seek your own satisfaction in any thing.
43. To like the lowest employments.
44. To like the poorest things.
45. Not to speak either good or evil of yourself.
46. To humble yourself even towards inferiors.
47. Not to excuse yourself when you are reprov'd.
48. Not to defend yourself when found fault with.
49. To be silent when you are disquieted.
50. Always to renew your determination of becoming a saint, saying: 'My Jesus, I desire to be all Thine, and Thou must be all mine.'

Blessed be Jesus our love, and Mary our hope after Jesus.

THE AUTHOR'S PROTEST.

In obedience to the decrees of Urban VIII., I declare that I have no intention of attributing any other than a purely human authority to the miracles, revelations, favours, and particular cases recorded in this book; and the same as regards the titles of saints and blessed, applied to servants of God not yet canonised, except in those cases which have been confirmed by the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Apostolic See, of which I declare myself to be an obedient son; and therefore I submit myself and all that I have written in this book to her judgment.

APPENDIX.

*The sign * is prefixed in the instances in which the Editor was unable to procure the authors, or to find the passages, referred to.*

1. Gilbert. Serm. xi. in Cantic. int. opp. S. Bern.
- 2.*S. Greg. Magn. Mor. lib. ii. c. 2.
3. S. Buonavent. Stim. Amor. pars ii. c. 3.
- 4.*S. Thom. Opusc. de SS. Euch.
5. S. Bern. De Vitâ Solitariâ ad Frat. vers. fin.
- 6.*S. Dionys. Areop. De div. Nom. iv.
7. B. H. Suso. The Eternal Wisdom, b. i. ch. 13.
- 8.*S. Aug. in Ps. xxxvii.
9. Id. in Ps. cxlviii. 12.
- 10.*Roswejd. lib. i.
- 11.*Cæsarius, lib. x. c. 6.
12. Ap. P. St. Jure, l. iii. ch. 8, et in Opp. Thauleri. Colon. 1603.
13. Ven. Avila, Lett. xlii. ed. Migne.
14. S. Buonavent. in Vit. S. Francisci, c. 14.
15. Ven. Avila, Audi filia, c. 26. ed. Migne.
16. In Vitâ S. Gertrud. lib. i. c. 11.
17. S. Gregor. Magn. Dialog. lib. iii. c. 37.
18. S. Bern. Med. de Cognit. hum. conditionis, c. 8.
- 19.*Flores Aurel. Granl. iv. c. 68.
- 20.*Ven. Avila, Audi filia, c. 13.
21. Rodriguez, Christian Perfection, tr. viii. c. 30.
22. S. Bern. de Præc. et Dispens. c. ix.
23. S. Fr. of Sales, Introd. to Dev. Life, part iii. ch. xi.
- 24.*B. H. Suso, apud P. Brencola, Strada alla Perfezione.
25. S. Ph. Neri, Life, b. i. c. 20, p. 130. Orat. ed.
- 26.*S. John of the Cross, Tratt. delle Spine, t. iii. ccli. 4, § 2, n. 4.
- 27.*S. Bern.
28. Gerson, Tract. de Præp. ad Miss. Consid. 3.
29. S. Teresa, Foundations, ch. v. ed. R. P. Bouix, Paris 1854.
30. S. Fr. of Sales, Dev. Life, part i. ch. 4.
- 31.*P. Nierembergh, Tratt. pergil Scrupulosi.
- 32.*Glossa, in c. ad aures; de temp. ord. lit. f. in fine. 23, qu. 1, Quid culpatur, 2.
33. S. Fr. de Sales, Œuv. comp. t. i. pp. 283, 285. Paris 1850.
34. La Croix, Theol. lib. i. n. 434.
35. Natal. Alex. Theol. lib. iii. c. 4, reg. 10.
- 36.*Wigandt, Tr. ii. ex. 2, qu.
37. Salmantic. Tr. xx. c. 7, n. 10.
38. Ap. Natal. Alex. loc. cit. "in pravem ruas *presumptionis* fov-
sam," as quoted by S. Alph. it
is *precipitationis*.
- 39.*Wigandt, loc. cit. qu. 4.
40. S. Ignat. Loy. in Constit. Soc. Summar. 31, et in declar.
- 41.*B. Humbertus, lib. de Erud. Rel. c. 1.
42. Dionys. Cartus. in 2 dist. q. 3.
43. S. Buonavent. in Spec. Disc. pars i. c. 4.
44. Gerson, Tr. de Præp. ad Miss. cons. 6.
45. S. Ph. Neri, Life, b. ii. c. 10, p. 229.
46. Busenbaum, De Consc. Scrupul. c. 3. ed. Rom. 1844.
47. La Croix, Theol. lib. i. n. 558.
48. Tamburini, in Dec. c. 3. § 8.
- 49.*Gerson, in Tr. de Confess. et Scrup.
- 50.*Salmantic. Tr. xx. c. 11. n. 5.
51. Genett, Tr. i. c. 9, de pecc. in fin.
52. S. Thom. 1^a 2^æ q. 83, a. 6. concl.
53. Tertullian, de Pœnitent. c. iv.
54. Petavius, t. i. lib. x. c. 15, n. 5.
55. S. Aug. Serm. de Temp. Dom. iii. p. Pasch. in ed. Ben. Serm. xxii. de Script. c. ix.
56. S. Bern. Serm. i. in Purif. B.M.V.
57. Id. Serm. 28, n. z, in Cantic.

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